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LITTLE TUK. See page 34.

STORIES AND TALES.

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1876

BY

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN,

AUTHOR OF "WONDER STORIES TOLD FOR CHILDREN."

ILLUSTRATED BY M. L. STONE AND V. PEDERSEN.

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Red
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Author's Edition.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HURD AND HOUGHTON.

Cambridge: Riverside Press.

1876.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by
HURD AND HOUGHTON,
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RIVERSIDE, CAMBRIDGE:
STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY
H. O. HOUGHTON AND COMPANY.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present volume of Hans Christian Andersen's "Stories and Tales" is the complement of the volume entitled "Wonder Stories told for Children." It was found impossible to bring all of his shorter stories and fancies within the compass of a single volume, and in making the division some regard was had to that which he has himself several times pointed out, — that his stories are sometimes pure inventions of fancy and sometimes have their root in historic incidents or events, and scenes of which he has been cognizant. At the same time, any one who made the attempt to separate these writings exactly upon such a line would find, as Andersen himself has said, that after all one must accept the undiscriminating term of popular usage and call them all *stories*. Thus the companion volume is not all fancy, and this is not all fact; the elements are mingled, and reasons of convenience have sometimes caused a manifest departure from the rule laid down. Still, in a rough way, the two volumes do each represent strongly one and the other of these elements.

In the twenty-seventh volume of his "Collected Writings," Andersen has given a number of notes with a view to presenting briefly the origin and succession of his lesser stories. As such comments by an author on his own work are never devoid of interest, it has been thought expedient to reproduce them in this place.

At Christmas, 1829, there was published a little collection of poems, which closed with a wonder story given in prose, "The Ghost"; it was one which I had heard as a child, and now told in a manner something like Musæus, but it did not take until several years after, when it appeared in another shape as "The Travelling Companion."

In "In the Harz Mountains" (1831) appeared for the first time the true

wonder story vein, in the form of a story about an old king who was sure he never had heard a lie, and so promised that any one who should tell him one should have the princess and half the kingdom.

"Wonder Stories told for Children," the first part came out in 1835 in a little volume of 61 pages, containing "The Tinder-box," "Little Claus and Big Claus," "The Princess on the Pea," and "Little Ida's Flowers." In style one ought to hear the narrator; these stories were therefore made to suggest oral delivery; they were told for children, but their elders also were to be allowed to hear them. The three first named I had heard in my childhood amongst spinners and hop gatherers. "Little Ida's Flowers," on the other hand, arose from hearing the poet Thiele tell his little daughter Ida about the flowers in the Botanic Garden; a few of the child's comments I retained and repeated when I afterward wrote out the story.

A second part of 60 pages came out in 1836 and contained "Thumbling," "The Naughty Boy," and "The Travelling Companion." The year after a third part followed, in which were "The Little Sea-maid," and "The Emperor's New Clothes." The whole collection was now gathered into one volume and furnished with a title-page, table of contents, and a few words of preface, in which I said how little these stories seemed to strike people, and I gave some explanation as to the source from which I had obtained the material. Among the Danish popular stories which I had heard as a child and here told afresh, may be classed "The Tinder-box," "Little Claus and Big Claus," "The Princess on the Pea," and "The Travelling Companion." In Anacreon's poems may be found the fable of "The Naughty Boy." "The Emperor's New Clothes," which closes the part, is of Spanish origin; for the amusing idea we are indebted to Prince Don Manuel, born 1277, died 1347.[1] The only ones of my own invention are "Little Ida's Flowers," "Thumbling," and "The Little Sea-maid"; these three must therefore be named as my first three original wonder stories. The last of these attracted some attention and gave me the wish thereafter to invent for myself; and in 1838 appeared such a story, larger than my previous ones, "The Galoshes of Fortune." The same year, at Christmas, followed the first part of a new collection; in it were "The Daisy" "The Constant Tin Soldier," both of which were my own invention, and "The Wild Swans," adapted from a Danish popular story. A second part contained "The Garden of Paradise," "The Flying Trunk," and "The Storks." The first is one of the many stories which I had heard as a child, and which I always wished longer: the four winds must tell one more; the Garden of Paradise be shown still more clearly. Now I essayed it. "The Flying Trunk" has its *motif* from the "Arabian Nights." "The Storks" was founded on popular belief, and on the child's verse which is called out to the storks.

In the years 1840 and 1841, after a journey to Greece and Constantinople, there came "A Poet's Bazaar": from this "The Money-pig," "Friendship's Poet," and "A Rose from Homer's Grave" were taken and reproduced in

[1] The same idea is also employed by Cervantes in one of his masterly interludes ("entremesses") translated into German, and entitled "The Wonder Theatre."

the German collected edition of my Wonder Stories, illustrated by V. Pedersen. They are now incorporated also in the Danish edition.

The third part of "Wonder Stories told for Children" came out in 1842, containing "Ole Shut-eye," "The Rose-elf," "The Swineherd," and "The Buckwheat." In the one called "Ole Shut-eye" the idea alone is given of a being who makes children sleepy at his coming; Ole Shut-eye was embodied thus in the story, and in a comedy I brought him in person on the stage, and now quite recently the young sculptor Schierbeck has modeled in terra cotta our little dream Nis. The idea of the "Rose-elf" is as suggested by an Italian folk-song. "The Swineherd" has a few traces of an old Danish popular story, which could not properly be reproduced in the form in which I heard it when a child. The story of "The Buckwheat" is founded on a common belief that the lightning scorches buckwheat black. With this part closed the second volume, and was dedicated to —

"JOHANNE LOUISE HEIBERG.

We heard it said — Faëry is dead,
In fairy tale alone it lives;
Thou camest — every true heart said
That Truth a home to the fairies gives."

The first dedication was given to Madame Heiberg, not only because she then was a great, famous artist, but as one of the few who had most recently expressed their friendliness and their thanks for these writings, which were not at that time much regarded. Her kind words, and also H. C. Örsted's often expressed pleasure at the humorous element in the stories, were the first noticeable encouragement I received.

In the year 1842 I contributed to "Gaea" the story of "The Elder Mother," the seed of which lies in Thiele's saying: "There dwells in the elder a being who is called Elder Mother, or the elder woman. She resents every injury done to the tree, and the story goes that a man who chopped down an elder-tree, suddenly died shortly after." The Elder Mother becomes in the wonder story a Danish Dryad, the memory itself, and thus is she later, in a comedy, brought on the stage. The same year was contributed to Gerson and Kaalund's "Monthly Journal" the story of "The Bell"; this, like nearly all the subsequent stories and tales, is my own invention. They lie in my thoughts like a seed that needs only a shower, a sun's ray, and a drop of wormwood, and it flowers out. What could be expressed in the wonder story became to me more and more clear. Every year I came to have a better knowledge of my own strength and its limitation.

My stories had won readers, not only among children but also among their elders; when now, in 1845, a new collection appeared; it took the short title of "New Wonder Stories." This little part, in which one finds "The Angel," "The Nightingale," "The Ugly Duckling," and "The Lovers," was dedicated to the poet Carl Bagger, as "a poor return for the fresh thoughts and warm feelings which his rich, poetic writings have inspired in me."

The first half of "The Ugly Duckling" was written during a visit of several days in the summer at Gisselfeldt, and the close was first put upon paper a half year afterward, while the other three went through the foundery as it were all at once. With this collection began the greater reputation of my Wonder Stories. For "The Angel" the well-known painter, Kaulbach, has since made a charming design, which has found its way everywhere in an engraving.

In the summer of 1846, upon the occasion of a long visit at Nysö, in company with Thorwaldsen, who made himself merry over "The Lovers" and "The Ugly Duckling," he said to me one day, "Come, write us a new, amusing wonder story. You can write one on a darning-needle!" and so I wrote "The Darning-needle." About the same time came "The Grandmother"; it was remarked that this sketch had a likeness to a poem of Lenau's; I found this so when I read that, and therefore placed Lenau's little poem as a motto to my story when it first was printed, I believe in the "Portfolio"; people saw thus that I knew there was a similarity, but they would not believe I had written mine first.

A second collection, with the two Wonder Stories "The Fir-tree" and "The Snow-queen," was dedicated to the writer, Professor Frederick Höegh-Guldberg. "The Fir-tree" was suggested to me one evening in the Royal Theatre, during the presentation of the opera "Don Juan," and written out that same night. The first chapter of "The Snow-queen" was written at Maxen, near Dresden; the remainder at home in Denmark.

The third collection bore as introduction, "To Henrik Herz; thanks for the works which his deep poetic soul and his rich wit and humor have given us." It contained "The Elfin Mound," "The Red Shoes," "The Leap-frog," "The Shepherdess and Chimney-sweep," and "Holger Danske." In "The Story of my Life" I have related how, at my Confirmation, I had for the first time a pair of shoes "that creaked when I walked over the church floor, and it gave me a thrill of pleasure to think that all the people in church could now hear that my shoes were new: but my piety was disturbed; I felt it, and had afterward a horrid qualm of conscience that my thoughts were quite as much on my shoes as on the good God." The remembrance of this suggested the story "The Red Shoes," which in Holland and America seems to have won the most renown. "The Leap-frog" was the story of a moment, told to some little children who had asked me to tell them a story. "Holger Danske" is founded on a Danish popular story, very like the story of Frederick Barbarossa, who sits on the Kyffhäuser mountain with his beard grown fast to the table.

The first collection for the second volume appeared in 1847, inscribed to J. L. Heiberg's mother, "the intellectual, highly gifted Madame Gyllembourg," and contained "The Old Street Lamp," "The Neighboring Families," "The Darning-needle," "Little Tuk," and "The Shadow." The story of "Little Tuk" was thought out during a visit to Oldenborg; a few recollections from my childhood are included in it. "The Shadow" was composed during a summer stay at Naples, but first written out at Copenhagen. The year after there followed a second collection, which contained

"The Old House," "The Drop of Water," "The Little Match Girl," "The Happy Family," "The Story of a Mother," and "The Flax." In several of the Wonder Stories incidents are found which belong to my older days. I have in "The Story of my Life" mentioned a few such touches which are preserved in "The Old House," such as that the poet Mosen's little son gave me, on setting out from Oldenborg, one of his tin soldiers, that I might not be so dreadfully alone. The composer Hartmann's little Maria was the one who, when two years old, always when she heard music and singing, must needs dance to it. When her elder brothers and sisters came into the room singing a psalm-tune, she began her dance, but her musical sense would not let her be out of tune, and so she was kept standing, so long as it lasted, first on one foot and then on the other; she danced in perfect psalm-tune measure quite unconsciously. It was for H. C. Örsted that "The Drop of Water" was written. "The Little Match Girl" was written at the Castle of Graasteen, where I stopped for a few days on a journey abroad, and received from Herr Flinch a letter asking me to write a story for his almanac to accompany one of three pictures inclosed. The picture I chose was that of a little girl with matches. At Glorup, in Funen, where I generally spent several days in summer, a part of the garden was at that time overgrown, as it had been from an early time, with great burdocks, planted for the large white snails which were once a delicacy. The burdock and snail gave me material for the story "The Happy Family," which was written out later during my first visit to London. "The Story of a Mother" sprang forth without any special cause; in the street, as I was walking, came the thoughts which unfolded themselves as I wrote. This story in translation has given great comfort to those to whom it applies. The story of "The Flax" was written in 1849, and printed then in "Father-land."

After a journey northward, there came out in 1851 "In Sweden." From this there were afterward selected these stories, printed in the German illustrated edition: "The Bird Phœnix," "The Grandmother," "A Story," and "The Dumb Book." These were now for the first time illustrated. Already several of my Wonder Stories had previously been illustrated in Germany, by Hosemann, Count Pocci, Ludvig Richter, and Otto Speckter; the last named artist's very charming pictures were afterward used in the English edition, under the title "The Galoshes of Fortune, and other Tales." My German publisher, Consul Lorck, in Leipsic, now determined to produce a complete collection of my stories, with illustrations, and asked me to find a worthy Danish artist for this purpose, and I found the since deceased naval officer, Lieutenant V. Pedersen. The book-seller Reitzel afterward bought electrotypes from Mr. Lorck, and so there appeared in 1849 the Danish edition with 125 illustrations.

With this elegant volume the collection of my Wonder Stories was closed, but not my activity in this line of composition; a new title must therefore be chosen for my new collection, and this I called "Stories" ("Historier"), a name which in our tongue I conceive to be the best chosen for my Wonder Stories in all their scope and nature. The popular way of talking

gives the same title to the simple narrative and the boldest flight of fancy; nursery tales, fables, and narratives are called by children, peasants, and common people generally, by the short name *stories*.

The first little part, published in 1852, contained, "The Story of the Year," "The Loveliest Rose in the World," "A Picture from the Castle Ramparts," "A Vision of the Last Day," "It's quite True," "The Swan's Nest," and "Good Humor." In 1853 the next part came out, containing: "Grief of Heart," "Everything in its Right Place," "The Nis at the Grocer's," "In a Thousand Years," and "Under the Willow-tree." "Write," said the poet Thiele, "a story about a flute that blows everything in its right place." In these words lay already a complete idea and from it sprang the story.

When the first edition of the stories was sold, Reitzel, and Lorck in Leipsic, arranged together to produce an enlarged edition, also illustrated, like the recent Wonder Stories. Pedersen made the designs, and there appeared in 1855 the illustrated stories, in which, beside those already named, there was included a single new one, and all those also which were printed in the "Danish People's Almanac." These were, "There's a Difference," "Five out of one Shell," "A Leaf from the Sky," "The Old Grave-stone," "Jack the Dullard," "From a Window in Vartou," "Ib and little Christine," "The Last Pearl," "Good for nothing," "The Maidens," "In the uttermost Part of the Sea," and "The Money-pig."

The Wonder Story "There's a Difference" grew out of a visit at Christinelund near Praestö: there stood upon the moat an apple-tree in blossom, the very picture of spring. The tree was so pretty and so fragrant in my thoughts that I could not be satisfied until I had planted it in a story. "Five out of one Shell" has its root in a reminiscence of my childish home, where a little wooden box filled with earth, in which was planted a leek and a single pea, was my own blossoming garden. "The Old Grave-stone" is, as it were, a whole mosaic of recollections; the place which my thoughts gave to the story is Svendborg; there the idea of it first was suggested. A worn out grave-stone, which was used as a step outside of the door in Collin's old place on Broad Street, often entered my mind, with its half-effaced inscription; and as old Preben, in the room close by, where his wife lies a corpse, tells about her in the time of her youth, and of their young love, so that he grows young and happy over it, just so the composer Hartmann's old father sat and talked when his dear wife lay with closed eyes; all these memories are recalled in it. The story itself, by the way, was first printed in German, in the "Bavarian Almanac," to which I had been invited to give a sketch. "Jack the Dullard" is a Danish popular story, told afresh: it stands pretty much alone among the later stories, which were nearly all invented by me. "Good for nothing" has its only origin in a few words which I heard my mother say when I was a child. One day when I had seen a boy hurrying down to the washing place at the Odense River where his mother stood out in the water and washed linen, I heard a widow noted for her frankness call out from a window and scold at the boy: "You going down again with brandy for your mother! that's disgraceful! fy! never let me see you become such a

person as your mother; she's good for nothing." I came home and told what I had heard. They all said, "Yes, the old washerwoman drinks. She's good for nothing;" only my mother took her part. "Do not judge her so hardly," said she; "the poor thing toils and drudges, stands in the cold water, and gets no warm meal for several days: she must have something to bear up with; it is not indeed the best thing for her to take, but she has nothing better; she has gone through a great deal. She is honest; she takes good care of her little boy and keeps him looking neatly." My mother's gentle speech made a deep impression on me, since I as well as the others thought ill of the washerwoman. Many years after, when another little incident led me to think how easily men often judge harshly, where gentleness can see quite another aspect to the case, this circumstance came back to me, and my mother's words were fresh in my mind when I wrote the story, "Good for nothing."

When the German edition was sold and a new one projected, there was collected the before mentioned stories from "In Sweden," and "A Poet's Bazaar"; then there were added three from the "Danish People's Almanac," — "The Thorny Path of Honor," and the stories, "The Jewish Maiden," in which is told again a Hungarian story, and "The Neck of a Bottle," — all illustrated by Pedersen. The last story for which he made drawings was "The Stone of the Wise Men," with which we closed the collection, although this as well as "The Neck of a Bottle" belong to the later "New Stories and Tales" in eight parts. With this I close my reference to the edition illustrated by Lieutenant Pedersen.

The year after there appeared no fewer than eight numbers of "New Stories and Tales"; of these and of the scattered stories that appeared in journals and magazines, we will make a few notes. The first part, or, as it was called, the first collection, came out at Christmas, 1857, and has already passed through four editions. The collection was inscribed to Madame Serre, at Maxen, and contained "Soup made of a Sausage-stick," "The Neck of a Bottle," "The Old Bachelor's Nightcap," "Something," "The Old Oak-tree's Last Dream," and "The Horn Book."

In our proverbs and phrases there sometimes lies the seed of quite a story. I once mentioned this, and gave as an illustration, "Soup made of a Sausage-stick." My friend, Councilor of State Thiele, said one day in jest, "You ought to write us the story of a bottle, from its first origin till that moment when only half of it is in use as a bird's glass," and from that came the story, "The Neck of a Bottle." "The Old Bachelor's Nightcap" has only two knitting points in it, the origin of the name "Pebersvend," and the story about the holy Elizabeth. In the story "Something," there is introduced an incident that really occurred. On the west coast of Sweden I heard of an old woman, who burned her house to give warning to a number of people who were out on the ice, that the spring flood had come. "The Old Oak-tree's Last Dream," as well as "The Horn Book," were a sudden suggestion.

A second collection appeared in the spring of 1858, dedicated to Madame Laessö (born Abrahamson), and contained "The Marsh-king's Daughter,"

"The Swiftest Runners," and "The Bell's Hollow." The first of these belongs to those stories on which I have expended most time and labor; and perhaps some people here and there may be interested to observe as through a microscope how it has grown and takes its form. The substance of it came suddenly like all my Wonder Stories, just as a well-known melody or snatch of music may come to one. I told at once the entire story to one of my friends, then it was written down, afterward written over again; but even when for the third time it stood upon paper I would see that entire parts still did not stand forth as clearly and distinctly as they could and must. I studied some of the stories of our island, and by these was carried back in time, and with this beginning the truth was more nearly reached. I read a few of the current sketches of travel from Africa; the tropical profusion and the peculiar novelty took possession of me; I saw the country and could talk about it with more authority. A few writings on the flight of birds were also of value; they suggested new ideas, and gave characteristic expression of the life of birds, such as moves in this wonder story, — so that it was in a short time written over five or six times till I was quite certain that I could now do no better with it.

"The Bell's Hollow" sprang from a popular belief about a merman in Odense River, and the story of a church-bell which swung itself out from Albain church tower. The third collection came out in the spring of 1859, dedicated to the composer Professor J. P. C. Hartmann, and contained "The Wind's Tale concerning Waldemar Daae and his Daughters," "The Girl who trod upon Bread," "Ole the Watchman," "Anne Lisbeth," "Children's Prattle," and "A String of Pearls." In Danish popular stories, as well as in historic records about the old manor of Borreby near Skjelskjör, one finds the account of Waldemar Daae and his daughters. It was one of the stories I worked over the most, with respect to style, in order to give the language something of the effect of the whirring, soughing wind, which I made tell the story.

I had early heard the story of the girl who trod upon bread, which became stone and with her disappeared in the marsh. I set myself the problem to raise her psychologically into expiation and salvation; the story grew out of that. In "Anne Lisbeth" I have wished to show that all good aspirations lie in the hearts of men, and must, even if in a roundabout way, develop themselves; here it is the love of a mother which gives life and strength in the midst of fear and trembling. "A String of Pearls" gives a time of change which I myself have lived through. In my childhood it was not unusual for a journey, in smooth sailing, from Odense to Copenhagen to take a time of about five days, now it needs only about as many hours.

The fourth collection came out at Christmas, 1859, and contained "Pen and Inkstand," "The Child in the Grave," "The Farm-yard Cock and the Weathercock," "Charming," and "A Story from the Sand Hills." Every one who has heard Ernst or Leonard will in the story of the "Pen and Inkstand" recall the wonderful violin playing. "The Child in the Grave," like the "Story of a Mother," has, more than any of my stories, given me

pleasure, while many an afflicted mother has found trust and strength through them. In the story "Charming," all the absurdly naïve and commonplace talk of the widow is pretty nearly taken from nature. "A Story from the Sand Hills" was written after a visit to Skagen and the west coast of Jutland. I found here a nature and a popular life which could rest as a foundation for the thoughts which I wished to incorporate in writing, — thoughts which had long possessed me and had come into existence through a conversation with Oehlenschläger. His words had made a deep impression on my young mind; I thought only of the words, and did not clearly understand then as now how truly they had sprung forth.

Who of us does not know the feeling in which one often gives expression to a doubt, when one does not at bottom doubt but only wishes to hear from another his own belief confidently expressed. Perhaps this was the case here, or it may have been more to prove the firmness of my faith. We talked of eternity, and Oehlenschläger threw out the words, "Are you so very sure that there is a life after this?" I held fast by the assurance, grounded on God's righteousness, but broke forth in my speech into the not over wise words, "Man can ask for it." He persisted: "Is it not again a great piece of vanity in you to dare to ask for everlasting life? Has not God given you infinitely much in this world? I know," he continued, "what wonderful fullness of the Godhead He has granted me: when I in death close my eyes, I will thankfully pray and bless Him; should He grant me still an everlasting life, then would I receive it as a new and infinite grace."

"You can talk so," said I, "God gave you so very much on the earth, and I too dare say that; but how many are there not who are placed quite otherwise in the world, — cast into it with a sick body, a diseased mind, borne long the bitterest way to sorrow and want, why should they so suffer, why is there so unequal an allotment? that were a wrong, and that God cannot do. He will give compensation, lift and loosen what we could not." What I said became the material for the little narrative, "A Story from the Sand Hills." When it came out, a critic said that the word of doubt that lay at its bottom I had never heard spoken or had given voice to myself; that thus there was something like falsehood in the story. If I remember rightly, it was the same or another equally knowing who gave it as his opinion that one certainly would feel himself deceived, if, after he had read the sketches of nature in my narrative, or the account of Skagen which I had contributed to the "Danish People's Almanac," he should now travel there and expect to find such a poetic country as that given by me. I had, however, the pleasure of receiving a visit from Conference Councilor Brinck Seideln, the man who could best judge about the truth of it, and who himself had given an excellent sketch of Skagen in his account of Hjörring County, and he expressed his thanks in the warmest manner for the faithfulness and truth with which I had painted all that country. From the priest of Skagen I received a letter, in which he also spoke of his pleasure at the sketches of nature, and especially because they were so true. He added, "We shall now also believe, and tell when strangers come to the mound where the church lies buried in the sand, 'Jörgen lies therein.'"

A young inhabitant there showed me much kindness, carried me round with him, out to the Green, and to Old Skagen. On the way we went by the church, where the tower only still rose above and served as a landmark to those at sea. He would not go over the difficult path; I stepped out of the wagon, went alone, and have in my narrative given the impression of what I saw there. I heard that my otherwise excellent guide, after he had read "A Story from the Sand Hills," said that I never had been close up to the church; he knew it, for he had driven me himself. It seemed to amuse people that I should write about what I had not seen, but it did not amuse me. One day in Copenhagen I met the man and asked him at once if he remembered our journey, and he replied, "We drove below the church out to Old Skagen."

"Yes, *you* drove," I answered; "but you must remember that I got out of the carriage and went up to it;" and then I told him how strangely I had been remarked upon for it.

"Quite right!" said he, "you must have been there, but I had forgotten it." I reminded him of the sand ridge where I again overtook him and drove further.

"I recollect that I was not up by the tower," said the man, "and so believed that you had not been either."

I mention this little incident for the sake of the truth. Perhaps at some other time after I am dead, one or another who heard this from my guide's own mouth may repeat that I had not been there and seen it with my own eyes. Among the peasants and fishermen thereabout I noticed many characteristic traits, and received many good explanations, which I put into new shape afterward; but with regard to such matters given me by those who knew about them, I got the friendly counsel from a reviewer, that one who makes sketches should get his facts from the people where they live, and this is just what I did.

"A Story from the Sand Hills" got for me the hearty thanks of the poet Paludan-Müller, which I set such store by that I mention it here.

In the spring of 1861 there was published "New Wonder Stories and Tales," second part, containing: "Twelve by the Mail," "The Beetle," "What the Good-man does is sure to be Right," "The Stone o the Wise Men," "The Snow Man," "In the Duck-yard," and "The Muse of the Coming Age."

In a number of "Household Words," Charles Dickens has collected a number of Arabian proverbs and sayings; among them was this: "When the Emperor's horse got his golden shoes, the beetle also stretched his leg out." "We recommend," says Dickens in a note, "Hans Christian Andersen to write a story about this." I had quite a desire to do so, but no story came. Not until nine years after, during a visit at the hospitable manor of Basnös, where I accidentally read Dickens's words again, did the story of "The Beetle" suddenly spring forth. "What the Good-man does is sure to be Right" is one of those Danish popular stories which I had heard as a child and told now after my own fashion.

In the course of the year I had been out, so to speak, on almost all the radii

of the wonder-story circle, and when therefore not seldom an idea or a sentiment presented itself and carried me back to what I had already given, I let the idea go or else sought to bring it out under a new shape; so the piece, "The Stone of the Wise Men" got something of an oriental form and a strong stamp of the allegory. I have been blamed because my later stories have a philosophic force, lying outside my province, and this is especially applied to this piece, and to the fanciful one in the same part, called "The Muse of the Coming Age." Still this is sprung from the soil of the wonder story. It has been said and written that this part was the weakest of any I had offered, and yet there are to be found in it two of my best told stories: "What the Good-man does is sure to be Right," and "The Snow Man." This last was written at Christmas, during a visit to charming Basnös, and has been preferred to many of my stories on several occasions, and very often has received great praise under the excellent recitations of the royal actor Manzius.

Of late it has been said by one and another that it is decidedly the first of my stories which have the most significance, and that my later ones give place to these. This is really only accidental, but it can be explained. People, who in youth read my first stories are grown old and have lost the freshness of soul with which they then read and enjoyed my writings. Perhaps also one and another have found that the stories have received such a wide circulation and praise in the world as to give the author great pleasure while yet alive, and when now the oldest stories are put to the test, again they are left in peace and the later ones are taken up and criticised. People often throw out words without accounting for them as to which stories and tales belong to the newer and which to the older ones. Several times I have heard it said: "Yes, I hold by those of your stories which are the oldest;" and when I asked "Which are these?" I very often get the answer, "The Butterfly," "It is quite True," "The Snow Man," and just these belong to the newer ones, — some to those just before the latest.

If this last part was one of the weaker sort, which I do not now believe, then certainly was that part one of the best which followed just after Christmas, 1861, and contained "The Ice Maiden," "The Butterfly," "Psyche," and "The Snail and the Rose-tree." It was dedicated with a few lines to the poetic writer Björnstjerne Björnson.

"The Ice Maiden" was written in Switzerland after I had several times visited that land, and now on a journey home from Italy stopped there for a longer visit. The whole passage about the eagle's nest was an account of what really took place, as narrated to me by the Bavarian popular poet Koppel. "The Butterfly" was likewise composed in Switzerland, on a walk from Montreux to Chillon. "Psyche" was written a few months earlier, when I was still in Rome. An incident of my first stay there in 1833–34 came into my mind and gave the first suggestion. A young nun was to be buried, they dug her grave and found in it a splendid statue of Bacchus. "The Snail and the Rose-tree" belongs to the maturer Wonder Stories.

Since this collection came out there has followed a heavy, bitter year, a year of war; Denmark lost Sleswick and Als, — who could think of anything else? It was more than a year and a day before I wrote any story,

and only at Christmas, 1865, did there come out another part, which was dedicated to the ballet writer, August Bournonville, and contained "The Will-o'-the-wisp is in the Town, says the Moor-woman," "The Windmill," "The Silver Shilling," "The Bishop of Börglum and his Kindred," "In the Nursery," "Gold Treasure," and "The Storm moves the Sign-boards." The story about the will-o'-the-wisp sprang out of the mood I was in during the year of the war, — it is a leaf from the Wonder Story of Time. There stands on the way between Sorö and Holsteinborg a windmill, which I often passed, and which always seemed to desire a place in a wonder story. It got it at last.

"The Silver Shilling" was written in Leghorn. I came by steamer from Civita Vecchia; on board I changed a scudo in order to have some small change, and there was given me a bad two-franc piece. Nobody would take it, I was vexed at being cheated, but soon there came an idea for a wonder story, and so I have my money back again. "The Bishop of Börglum and his Kindred" was written after a visit at Börglum monastery. This well-known historic story from a rude dark age, still called by many a beautiful period and one it was worth while to live in, is placed in comparison with our really bright and happier time. "Gold Treasure" was written at Frijsenborg. The woody solitude, the blooming flower-garden, the pleasant rooms of the castle wove themselves in my memory into a writing which blossomed forth like a flower in those happy days. "The Storm moves the Sign-boards" was, like "The Bird of Popular Song," written in Copenhagen, about Christmas-time. The entire sketch of the corporation festivities is a recollection from my childhood at Odense.

The last part of "New Wonder Stories and Tales" appeared at Christmas, 1866, dedicated to the painter Carl Bloch, and contains: "Kept close is not forgotten," "The Porter's Son," "Flitting Day," "The Summer-gowk," "Aunty," and "The Toad." In "Kept close is not forgotten" three pictures are given. The first has its *motif* from Thiele's popular stories. The story is there told of a lady who was fastened by robbers to a dog kennel in the garden; how she got free I have told. The second picture belongs at home in our time. The incident occurred at Holsteinborg. The third picture, with the poor, weeping girl, belongs also to the present. I heard from the girl's own mouth what is here written down. "The Porter's Son" has several points from real life. "Aunty" I knew in several persons who now lie in their graves. "The Summer-gowk" was written on demand; my friend, State Councilor Drewsen, who holds most fervently to Danish memories and the Danish tongue, was lamenting one day the frequency with which good old names got changed. In the paper a gardener advertised "winter-gowk," which we in our younger years always and more intelligibly called "summer-gowk," because it mocks us in summer. He bade me write a story and use the old name in it, and so I wrote "The Summer-gowk." "The Toad" was composed during my visit at Setubal in the summer of 1866. From one of the deep wells there, where the water is drawn up in crocks that are placed on a great revolving wheel, and then by means of conduits is carried out over the gardens, I saw one day a great ugly toad come out. When I came to examine him more closely, I

remarked his wise eyes, and soon I had a whole story which afterward was written out in Denmark, and furnished with Danish nature and home scenes. "The Old Church Bell" was written by request to accompany a picture in Schiller's album. I wished to introduce a Danish element, and one may, by reading this story, see how I have solved my problem. "The Tea-pot" was written at Toledo. "The Two Brothers" is a little fanciful vignette of the Brothers Örsted's life. "The Wicked Prince" is an old story, and belongs to the earliest of my stories. The first time it was printed in Siesby's "The Salon," and has since been introduced into the German and English editions of my stories. I will therefore not omit it here. "The Greenies," as well as "Peiter, Peter, and Peer" were written, at Rolighed by the lime-kilns, and arose from that contentment and pleasant humor which a happy home can give. "The Nis and the Dame" has its root in a popular story about a Nis that worried a dog chained up.

The earlier written Stories and Tales, to the number of sixty-nine, are published in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth volumes of my collected writings; the newer sixty-two Wonder Stories and Tales occupying about the same number of sheets, are given here in the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-seventh volumes, so that the collected writings "now have in their completeness the one hundred and thirty-one Wonder Stories and Tales which I have written.

ROLIGHED, *August*, 1868.

It only needs to be added to this summary of the author that the stories since written have, with one or two trifling exceptions, been sent by Mr. Andersen to the "Riverside Magazine for Young People," to be published there a little in advance of their appearance in Denmark and England. These later stories have been preserved part in this, and part in the companion volume, "Wonder Stories told for Children." To enumerate them with the dates of their appearance in America, they are, — "The Court Cards" (January, 1869), "The Dryad" (February), "Which was the Happiest?" (March), "Luck may lie in a Pin" (April), "Sunshine Stories" (May), "The Comet" (June), "What one can invent" (July), What happened to the Thistle" (October), "Chicken Grethe's Family" (November and December), "The Candles" (July, 1870), "Great Grandfather" (August), "The Most Extraordinary Thing" (September), "Danish Popular Stories" (October).

The illustrations in the two volumes are from those contributed by Lieutenant Pedersen, as mentioned by Andersen, and from designs by M. L. Stone, of New York.

STORIES AND TALES.

A PICTURE BOOK WITHOUT PICTURES.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is wonderful! at those very times when I am conscious of the warmest and best feelings, my hand and tongue seem, as it were, tied, so that I can express nothing, nor give utterance to any of the thoughts that fill my breast. And yet I am a painter: my eye tells me this, and every one has acknowledged it who has seen my sketches and my pictures.

I am a poor fellow, living in one of the narrowest of streets; yet there is no want of light, for I live high up, and have a view over all the roofs. For some days after I first came to town, the whole scene around appeared to me crowded and yet lonely. In place of the groves and green hills, I saw nothing but dark gray chimneys, as far as my eye could reach. I met with no one whom I knew; no familiar face greeted me.

One evening I was standing, with a heavy heart, at the casement. I opened it and looked out. Imagine my delight, when I beheld the face of an old friend — a round, kind face, looking down on me — my best friend in my little garret. It was the Moon, the dear old Moon, with the same unaltered gleam, just as she appeared when, through the branches of the willows, she used to shine upon me as I sat on the mossy bank beside the river. I kissed my hand to her, and she beamed full into my chamber, and promised to look in upon me whenever she went out; and this she has faithfully done. At every visit she tells me of one thing or another that she has seen during the past night, in her silent passage across the sky. "Sketch what I relate to you," said the Moon at her first visit, "and you will have a pretty picture book." I

acted upon the hint: in my own fashion I could give a new "Thousand and One Nights" in pictures; but this would be too tedious. The sketches I present are not selected, but given as I received them: a painter, poet, or musician might make something of them. What I offer are merely slight sketches upon paper, the framework of my thought. The Moon came not every evening — a cloud often intervened.

FIRST EVENING.

Last night — these are the Moon's own words — I sailed through the clear air of India. I mirrored myself in the Ganges. My beams struggled to force a way through the thick roof of the old plane-trees, close and compact like the shell upon the tortoise. From out the thicket stepped a Hindoo maiden, slender as a gazelle, beautiful as Eve. There was something truly ethereal, yet at the same time of corporeal beauty, about the Indian girl. I could discern her thoughts beneath her delicate skin. The thorny tendrils of the Liana tore her sandals; but she stepped swiftly through them. The wild beasts, that came up from the river, whither they had been to quench their thirst, fled affrightedly away, for the maiden held a burning lamp in her hand. I could see the fresh blood in those delicate fingers, which were arched into a screen over the flame of the lamp. She drew nigh to the river, placed the lamp upon the waters, and the lamp sailed away with the stream. The air was agitated, and it seemed that it must put out the light; but still the flame burned on, and the maiden's dark and sparkling eyes followed it, with a soul-speaking glance from beneath the long silken lashes of her eyelids. Well she knew that if the lamp burned so long as she could follow it with her eye, her lover would be alive; but if it went out, then he would be dead. And the lamp burned and flickered, and the maiden's heart burned and quivered. She knelt down and said a prayer. Beside her lay a deadly serpent in the grass; but she thought only of Brahma, and of her beloved. "He lives!" she cried exultingly; and echo resounded from the hills, "He lives!"

SECOND EVENING.

It was but yesternight (said the Moon) that I peeped into a small court-yard, inclosed by houses: there was a hen, with eleven chickens. A pretty little girl was skipping about. The hen clucked, and affrighted spread out her wings over her little ones. Then came the maiden's father, and chid the child; and I passed on, without thinking more of it at the moment.

This evening — but a few minutes ago — I again peeped into the same yard. All was silent; but soon the little maiden came. She crept cautiously to the hen-house, lifted the latch, and stole gently up to the hen and the chickens. The hen clucked aloud, and they all ran fluttering about: the little girl ran after them. I saw it plainly, for I peeped in through a chink in the wall. I was vexed with the naughty child, and was glad that the father came and scolded her still more than yesterday, and seized her by the arm. She bent her head back; big tears stood in her blue eyes. "What are you doing here?" he asked. She wept. "I wanted to go in and kiss the hen, and beg her to forgive me for yesterday. But I could not tell it you." And the father kissed the brow of the innocent child; but I kissed her eyes and lips.

THIRD EVENING.

In the narrow lane hard by — so narrow that my beams can only glide down the walls of the houses for a minute, and yet in that minute I see enough to comprehend the little world that stirs below — I saw a woman. Sixteen years ago she was a child. Abroad, in the country, she used to play in the garden of the old parsonage. The hedge-rows of roses were already old, and had shed their blossoms. They had run wild, and grew rankly in the walks and alleys, and wreathed their long shoots up the stems of the apple-trees: here and there a rose still sat upon her stem, not indeed so lovely as the queen of the flowers oft appears, but still there was color, and a perfume too. The Vicar's little daughter appeared to me a far fairer rose, as she sat upon her little bench under the tangled hedge, and kissed the squeezed-in pasteboard cheeks of her doll.

Ten years later I saw her again. I saw her in a splendid ball-room: she was the lovely bride of a rich merchant. I rejoiced in her good fortune: I sought her again in silent evenings, — ah, no one heeded my clear eye, my constant glance! My rose too grew up in untrained wildness, like the roses in the garden of the parsonage. Life in the every-day world has likewise its tragedy. This evening I witnessed a closing act.

In the narrow lane, she lay upon her bed, ill unto death; and the wicked landlord, rude and cold-hearted, — now her only hold left, — tore the curtains open. "Up, up!" he cried; "your cheeks are enough to frighten one. Deck yourself out! Get money, or I'll turn you into the street. Quick! up with you! quick!"

"The hand of death is upon me," she replied. "O spare me, — let me rest!" And he dragged her up, painted her cheeks, stuck roses in her hair, set her at the window, with a lighted candle beside her, and left the house. My eye was riveted upon her. She sat motionless: her hands only sank down into her lap. The wind blew against the window, and a pane was broken. But she sat still and silent. The window curtain fluttered, like a flame, about her — she was dead. From the open window the dead one still preached a moral; my Rose from the garden of the parsonage!

FOURTH EVENING.

This evening I was at a German play, said the Moon. It was in a small town, and a stable had been turned into a theatre: the stalls remained, and were fitted up and decorated as boxes, and all the wood-work was covered with colored paper. Under the low roof hung a small chandelier, formed of a hoop with candles stuck in it; and over this was fastened an inverted tub, in order that, as on the stage of a large theatre, the lights might be drawn up when the prompter's bell begins to tinkle.

"Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle!" and the little chandelier made a skip of half a yard. By this the folks knew that the play was going to begin.

A young nobleman with his lady, passing through the town,

were present at the play, and the house was in consequence crowded to excess. But the clear space under the chandelier looked like a small crater: not a soul sat in this spot, for the candles of the chandelier dripped down — drop! drop!

I could easily see all that passed, for it was so hot that the wickets had to be opened; and at every wicket the heads of servant-girls and lads outside were now seen peeping in, notwithstanding that the constables were posted inside the door, who threatened the intruders with their staves. Close to the orchestra was seen the youthful and noble pair, seated in two old arm-chairs, which at other times the burgomaster and his lady were wont to fill. To-night, however, those worthies had to sit for once upon the wooden benches, like the rest of the towns-folk. "Aye, look ye there now, — one sparrow-hawk in turn outflies another!" whispered the women to one another; and everything took a more stately aspect on this memorable occasion. The chandelier danced, the mob pressed forward, and got a rap on the knuckle for their pains, and I — aye, indeed, the Moon was also present with the rest during the whole of the play.

FIFTH EVENING.

Yesterday, said the Moon, I looked down upon Paris — busy, restless Paris: my glance penetrated into the apartments of the Louvre. An aged grandmother, poorly clad — she belonged to the class of alms-folk — followed an attendant into the large, empty throne-room. She wanted to see it, — she must see it; many a franc-piece and many a civil word it had doubtless cost her, before she succeeded in making her way so far into the palace.

The poor woman clasped her emaciated hands, and looked solemnly around, as if she were standing in a church. "It was here!" she said; "here!" And she approached the throne, from which hung down the rich gold-edged velvet covering. "There!" said she; "there!" and she bent her knee, and kissed the purple hangings. I wept, — she wept.

"'Twas not this velvet," said the attendant, and a smile played on his lips.

"And yet it was here!" said the old woman; "and it had the same look then."

"The same, and yet not the same," replied the man. "On that day the windows were smashed in, the doors burst open, and the floor ran with blood; and yet you may with truth say, your grandson died upon the throne."

"Died," repeated the old woman. No more words passed, I believe.

They soon left the apartment: the evening twilight faded away, and my light streamed with increased brightness upon the rich velvet hangings of the throne of France. Who, thinkest thou, was the old woman? I will relate a story to you.

It was in the Revolution of July, toward the close of the evening that preceded the most brilliant day of victory, when every house was a fortress, every window a barricade. The people stormed the Tuileries; women and children even fighting amongst the combatants: the crowd forced their way through the apartments and saloons of the palace. A poor, half-grown lad, in rags, fought bravely in the ranks with his older comrades; until at length he sank upon the floor, pierced with death-wounds from half a dozen bayonets. This passed in the throne-room, and the bleeding body was laid upon the throne of France: his wounds were partly covered with the velvet hangings, and his blood streamed over the royal purple. What a picture! the magnificent saloon — the groups of combatants! A broken standard lay upon the ground, the tricolored flag waved over the bayonets; and upon the throne lay the poor lad, his pallid features marked with the transfigurement of death: the eyes turned heavenward, whilst the limbs were already stiffened in the cramps of death: over his naked breast, over his tattered dress, was thrown the rich velvet drapery, with its silver lilies. It had been foretold to the lad that he should die upon the throne of France. His mother, in her love, had dreamt of a second Napoleon. My beam has kissed the wreath of flowers upon his grave, — my beam has in the past night kissed the brow of the aged grandmother, when she saw in a dream the picture which thou mayst here design — the poor and ragged boy upon the throne of France.

SIXTH EVENING.

I have been at Upsala, said the Moon. I looked down upon the broad plains, flagged with short turf, and upon the desolate fields: I mirrored myself in the river Fyris, whilst the steamboat frightened away the fishes into their sedgy retreats. The clouds chased one another beneath me, and cast their long shadows upon the graves of Odin, Thor, and Freya, as the hills there are called. Names may be seen cut in the thin turf upon the heights; for there is here no building-stone whereon the traveller could grave a mark, no wall of rock whereon to trace his name. The visitor therefore here cuts the turf, and the naked earth is covered with a net-work of letters and names along the range of hills, — an immortality which the next growth of turf effaces.

There stood a man upon the hill-top, — a poet. He emptied a mead-horn, ornamented with a broad silver ring, and whispered a name, which he charged the breezes not to betray; but I heard the name, for I knew it. An earl's coronet sparkled above it, and therefore he named it not aloud. I smiled. And does not a poet's crown sparkle above his? Eleonora d'Este's nobility is one with Tasso's name. I, too, know where blooms the rose of beauty.

So spake the Moon; and then a cloud passed before her face. O that clouds might never intervene between the poet and the rose!

SEVENTH EVENING.

Along the sea-shore stretches a grove of oaks and beeches, fresh and fragrant, which a hundred nightingales visit with every return of spring. The road lies between this grove and the ocean. Carriages roll past, one after another, but I follow them not: my glance rests upon one spot — a soldier's grave. The blackberry and the sloe spring up between the stones. Here lives the poetry of nature: how thinkest thou man reads it? Listen, and I will tell you what I heard last evening and in the past night.

First came two wealthy country-folks jogging along in their chaise. "Splendid trees those!" said one; "every tree

would yield at least ten cart-loads of fire-wood: we shall have a hard winter. Last year, you remember, we got fourteen dollars a load." So saying, they passed on.

"What a dreadful road!" said another man, driving past in his carriage. "This all comes from the cursed trees," answered his companion: "the only inlet for the air is from the sea." They drove on.

The diligence now came up: all the passengers were fast asleep, just in the most lovely part of the journey. The driver blew his horn; but he only thought to himself, "Very well blown — what a capital echo there is just here! but what do those sleepy folks inside care for it?" And the diligence disappeared.

Then came two young lads, galloping along on horseback, with all the fire and spirit of youth. They, too, looked with a smile upon the moss-green hills and the dark thicket. "I should like well enough to be walking here with pretty Christina, the miller's daughter," said one; and off they rode.

The flowers perfumed the air; every breath of wind was still; the ocean seemed, as it were, a part of the heaven, which overspanned the deep valley. A coach rolled past, in which were six persons. Four were asleep; the fifth was deep in thought, reflecting how his new summer coat would become him; the sixth popped his head out of the window, and turning to the coachman, asked whether there was anything remarkable in the heap of stones by the roadside. "Why, no," said the driver; "'tis nothing but a heap of stones; but the trees yonder — they are indeed worth looking at." — "Tell me about them." — "Aye, aye, they are remarkable if you will," said the man; "in the winter, when the snow is so deep that 'tis hard to keep to the right road, the trees are sign-posts to me, so that I am able to find my way, and avoid driving into the sea. What say you now — aren't they remarkable?" And so saying he drove on.

Now came a painter. His eyes sparkled; he spoke not a word, but only whistled to himself. The nightingales sang, one louder and more sweetly than another. "Hold your noise!" he exclaimed hastily. He was remarking attentively all the colors and tints in the landscape. "Blue, purple, dark

brown: what a glorious picture this would make!" His mind received it all, just as a mirror does a picture, and he whistled from time to time a march of Rossini's.

The last who came was a poor maiden. She sat down to rest upon the soldier's grave, and laid her bundle on the ground. Her lovely, pallid face was inclined, as if listening, in the direction of the grove; her eye sparkled, as she raised it again over the ocean heavenward. Her hands were clasped. She prayed — repeating, I believe, the Lord's Prayer. She did not herself fully comprehend the feeling that pervaded her breast; but well do I know, that year after year that moment will in memory invest the scene around her with more beautiful, yea, and with richer hues than the precise colors in which the artist painted it. My beams followed her, until the morning twilight kissed her brow.

EIGHTH EVENING.

Dark masses of clouds obscured the heaven: the Moon came not forth at all. I stood in double loneliness in my little chamber, and looked up into the region of air, from whence she should have appeared.

My thoughts flew far, far around, up to the friend who is wont each evening to tell me such lovely stories, and to show me pictures. What scenes indeed has she not lived to see! She floated over the waters of the Deluge, and smiled down upon the Ark, as she does now on me, and proclaimed the glad tidings of hope, that a new world should bloom again. When the people of Israel sat weeping beside the rivers of Babylon, she, too, looked in sorrow through the willows whereon they hung their harps. When Romeo climbed up the balcony, and the kiss of love rose from the earth like a cherub's thought, the Moon's shield stood half curtained behind the dark cypresses in the transparent expanse of air. She has seen the hero at St. Helena, when from the lonely cliff he looked forth upon the ocean, and his breast swelled with mighty thoughts. Yea, indeed, what cannot the Moon relate? The world's history is to her a book of adventures. To-night I see thee not, old friend, and for this once cannot note down any picture in memory of thy visit.

And as I stood thus looking up dreamingly at the firmament, a stream of light came forth. It was a beam of the Moon, — but it soon vanished: black clouds glided over her face. And yet it had been a greeting, a kind evening greeting, sent me by the Moon.

NINTH EVENING.

The air was again clear, and the Moon was in her first quarter. A thought struck me for a sketch. Hear what the Moon related to me.

I followed the polar bird and the whale to the eastern coast of Greenland. Naked rocks, covered with ice and clouds, compassed in a valley, where twining willows and bilberry plants were just in their richest blossom, and the fragrant Lychnis breathed forth its perfume. My light was feeble; my keel was like the acanthus-leaf, torn from its stalk and driven about for weeks upon the water. The northern lights burned with a broad belt, from which shot forth streams of fire in whirling columns over the whole of heaven, playing in strange coruscations of red and green.

The people who dwelt around had assembled for a dance, and merriment of various kinds; but there was probably none in whose accustomed eye the splendor of the scene would excite wonder. "Let the souls of the dead play at ball with the head of the walrus!" So thought they, in accordance with their popular belief: they had only mind and eye for the song and the dance.

In the middle of the circle stood a Greenlander; his fur cloak was thrown aside, and, beating on his hand-drum, he began a song about the seal, to which all present responded with an "Eia, Eia!" hopping round and round in a circle, dressed in their white fur coats. The scene was like a dance of bears: eyes and heads moved in the strangest manner. Now began the judgment and sentence: those who had come in enmity stepped forward, and the injured person recited, with a bold tone of ridicule, the faults of his antagonist, and all accompanied by the dance and the drum. The accused answered with equal skill, whilst all the people laughed, and meanwhile pronounced the sentence.

A sound reverberated among the rocks like a peal of thunder; the ice-fields above had split into pieces, and the huge precipitated masses descended in showers of dust. It was indeed a beautiful summer night in Greenland.

A hundred yards off, beneath an open tent of skins, lay a sick man. Life still stirred in his warm blood, and yet die he must; for he believed it, and all around believed it too. His wife was already sewing the skin covering tight around his limbs, that she might not afterward have to touch the dead body; and she asked him, "Wilt thou be buried high up upon the rocks, in the firm bed of snow? I will deck the spot with thy kajab and with thy arrows, and the Angekobb shall dance over it. Or wilt thou rather be sunk deep into the sea?"

"Into the sea!" replied the sick man; and his head inclined faintly, and a sad smile was on his cheek.

"Aye, it is a mild summer tent," said his wife; "the seals sport about there, the walrus sleeps at your feet, and the chase is safe and pleasant."

But the children with lamentings tore away the stretched skin from the entrance, that the dying man might be borne out to the sea, to the swelling ocean, which in his life had given him food, and was now to yield him repose in death. The floating ice-fields form his tombstone, as they pass hither and thither by day and by night. Seals slumber upon the ice-blocks: the storm bird drifts aloft over the spot.

TENTH EVENING.

I knew an old maid, said the Moon. Winter after winter she wore a yellow satin cloak trimmed with fur, which might be said never to grow old, for it was her only fashion. Every summer she wore the same straw hat, and, as I fancy, the same grayish blue gown. She only stirred from home to visit an old friend, who dwelt nearly opposite; but during the last few years even these visits ceased — her friend was dead. In her solitude the old lady used to trip about before the window, at which all summer long stood a row of pretty flowers; and in winter a fine crop of mustard and cress flourished upon the crown of a beaver hat.

During the last month she sat no longer at the window;

nevertheless I knew that she was still living, for I had not yet seen her set out on the great journey which had been so frequent a subject of talk between the old lady and her friend. "Yes," she would say, "I shall one day, when I die, make a longer journey than I ever did in my life-time. Six miles hence is the family vault, where they will carry me, that I may sleep with the rest of my family."

Last night a hearse stopped before the house, and a coffin was carried out. Then I knew that she had died. They put straw and matting around the coffin, and drove off. So slept now the quiet old maid, who in the last few years of her life had never quitted the house. And the hearse rolled quickly out of the town, as if going on a journey of pleasure. From time to time the driver looked timidly round: I fancy he was in some dread of seeing her seated behind him on the coffin, in the yellow satin cloak. And all the while he lashed his horses recklessly, yet holding in the reins as tightly as he could, until the bits were covered with foam. The horses were young and spirited: a hare darted across the road, and they became unmanageable and ran away. The quiet old maid, who from year's end to year's end had only moved about with a slow and noiseless step, in the circular course of habit, was now, a lifeless corpse, driven and hurried along the high-road over stick and stone. The coffin, with its covering of straw, was tossed up into the air, and fell upon the road; whilst horses, hearse, and driver dashed wildly off.

A lark rose singing from the field, warbled its morning hymn over the coffin, and then alighted upon it, pecking at the straw matting with its beak: but the chrysalis had already burst its prison, and the spirit was freed from its confinement. The lark rose exultingly again, and I veiled my face behind the reddening clouds of morning.

ELEVENTH EVENING.

I will give you a sketch of Pompeii, said the Moon. I was outside the city, in the Street of Tombs, as it is called, where the beautiful monuments are standing; where, exulting in their mirth, and wreathing their brows with roses, youths once danced with the fair sisters of Lais. The spot is now the abode of death.

German soldiers, in the pay of Naples, were on guard, playing with cards and dice. A party of foreigners, from over the mountains, walked into the city, attended by a guard. They had come to view, in my full and clear light, the city arisen from the tomb. I showed them the track of the carriage-wheels, in the streets paved with flag-stones of lava. I showed them the names upon the doors, and the signs of the various crafts still hanging before the houses. In the narrow courts they saw the cistern decked with shells, in which the fountains had played. But the waters played no more, the song was no longer heard from the richly painted chambers, before the doors of which dogs of bronze kept watch. It was the City of the Dead. Vesuvius alone still thundered forth his eternal hymn, each single strophe of which men call a new eruption. We went to the Temple of Venus, built of dazzling white marble: the weeping-willow has sprung up between the columns. The air was transparently clear, and in the background stood Vesuvius, black as night, from which the flames arose straight as the stem of a pine-tree. The illumined cloud of smoke lay in the still calm of night, like the pine-tree's crown, but red as blood.

A lady singer was one of the party — a truly noble singer: I have witnessed the homage paid her in the first cities of Europe. They approached an amphitheatre, and sat down upon the stone steps: a small open space was filled, as the whole building was thousands of years ago. There was still the stage, as in past times, with its bricked side-walls, and the two arches in the background, through which the same scenery was now visible as in former ages, Nature herself displaying to our view the hills between Sorrento and Amalfi.

The lady, in sport, descended to the stage and sang. The recollections of the spot inspired her. It put me in mind of the free Arab steed, when he snorts, and his mane stands erect, and he dashes off in his wild course. Here was the same ease and confidence. And sounds arose all around, as they did so many ages ago upon this self-same spot, shouts of applause and the clapping of hands.

Three minutes later, and the scene was deserted: all were gone; not a sound was longer heard. But the ruin stood,

unchanged, as it will stand for ages yet to come. The acclamations of the moment have died away, the song of the singer is mute, her notes and her smiles — all are forgotten, and passed away like a dream. Even to me this hour carries with it but a transient reminiscence.

TWELFTH EVENING.

I looked in at the window of a newspaper editor in a German town, said the Moon. The room was handsomely furnished, the shelves well lined with books, and a chaos of newspapers were scattered about. Several young men were in the room. The editor himself stood at his desk, and before him lay two little books, both by anonymous authors, which were to be reviewed.

"Here is a book that has been sent me," said he: "I have not yet read it, but 'tis prettily got up; what say you to its contents?"

"Why," replied one of the young men, who was himself a poet, "all very good, with the exception of some few things; but then, good Lord! he is only a young man. 'Tis true the verses might be improved; the ideas are sound enough; pity only that they are so commonplace! But what say you? We cannot always expect originality. You may perhaps give him a lift, but in my opinion it is clear that he will never be anything great as a poet. Still he has read a good deal, he is an Oriental scholar, and shows very fair critical powers; it was he who wrote the pretty review of my 'Life in the Present Day.' After all we must make allowance for a young author."

"Nay, but he is a downright ass," said another gentleman in the room. "In poetry nothing is worse than mediocrity; depend on it, he will never rise any higher."

"Poor devil!" said a third. "And yet his aunt is so proud of him, — the lady, Mr. Editor, who got the list of subscribers to your last volume of translations."

"Excellent woman! Well, I have given just a brief notice of the book, — unquestionable talent, a welcome gift, a flower in the garden of poetry, well got up, etc. But now for the other book: I suppose I shall have to purchase that. I have heard it praised; the author has genius — eh?"

"Why, so everybody says," replied the poet; "but it is wild and unpolished. His punctuation to be sure is full of genius. Trust me, it will do him good to be sharply handled; he gets far too high notions of himself."

"Nay, nay, you are unjust," interrupted a fourth. "Do not let us carp at trifles, but rather find pleasure in what is good, and really there is much here to praise; he writes better than all the rest put together."

"Heaven help him! If he is such a mighty genius, he may very well bear a sharp corrective. There are folks enough to extol him in private; don't let us drive him mad with flattery."

The editor resumed his pen, and wrote: "Evident talent — usual negligence here and there — shows that he can write bad verses as well as good (see page twenty-five, where there are two hiatus) — we recommend to him the study of the classics," etc.

I passed on, said the Moon, and peeped through the window of the aunt's house. There sat the honored poet, the tame one, I mean, receiving the homage of all the guests; and he was happy.

I sought the other poet, the wild one. He likewise was in a large assembly, and he too had his patron. His rival's book was the theme of conversation. "I shall some time or other read your poems," said the Mæcenas: "but to speak honestly, — you know I never say otherwise than I think, — I do not expect much from them. You are in my opinion too wild, too fanciful. But as a man, I have nothing to say; you are highly respectable."

A young girl sat in a corner, reading a book: "The glory of beauty shall be trodden in the dust: the works of the dust shall glory in their shame. It is an old story, and yet daily new!"

THIRTEENTH EVENING.

The Moon spake. Beside the forest-path stand two cottages; their doors are low, the windows placed irregularly; white thorn and barberries climb around them. The mossy roof is overgrown with yellow flowers and houseleek. In the

little garden are only cabbages and potatoes; but in the hedge stands a lilac-tree in blossom. Beneath it sat a little girl: her eyes were fixed upon the old oak-tree between the cottages, on whose tall and withered trunk, which is sawn off at the top, a stork has built its nest. He stood above, and rattled his bill. A little boy came out, and stood beside the girl: they were brother and sister.

"What are you looking at?" he asked.

"I am looking at the stork," she replied. "Granny told me that he will bring us a little brother this evening, or a little sister; and I am watching, that I may see it when it comes."

"The stork brings nothing," said the boy; "trust me. Granny told me so, too, but she was only joking; and then I asked her if she dared say so upon the Bible: no, she dared not do that, and I know well enough that what they say about the stork is only a story to please children."

"But where then is the baby to come from?" said the girl.

"Our Lord brings it," said the boy. "God has it under his mantle; but no one can see God, and therefore we cannot *see* that He brings it."

The breeze stirred in the branches of the lilac-tree. The children folded their hands, and looked at one another: surely it was God, who had come with the little baby! and they took each other by the hand. The cottage door opened, and the grandmother called to them and said, "Come here, and see what the stork has brought you — a little brother!" The children nodded, as if they already knew that he had come.

FOURTEENTH EVENING.

I sailed over Luneburg Heath, said the Moon. There stood a lonely cottage by the road-side. A few withered bushes grew around it, in which a nightingale was singing that had lost her way. In the cold of night she must surely perish; it was her swan's song I heard.

The morning dawned, and a troop of emigrant peasants with their families passed by; they were travelling in the direction of Bremen or Hamburg, to take ship to America, where they looked for brighter days. The women carried the youngest children on their backs, while the bigger ones

skipped along by their side. A miserable hack-horse was dragging a cart, upon which were piled all the chattels they possessed.

The wind blew cold, and a little girl nestled closer to her mother, who looked up at my round orb, now just upon the wane, and thought of the cruel need she had suffered in her home from the heavy taxes which she could not pay. Her thoughts were those of the whole troop. The rosy glimmer of day shone therefore like a ray of promise, the forerunner of a sun of happiness which should rise again. They heard the song of the dying nightingale: to them she seemed no false prophet, but the herald of good fortune. The wind whistled, — they understood not its presage: "Sail over the ocean! Ye have paid for the long passage with all that ye possessed; poor and helpless ye will set foot upon your land of promise. Ye may then sell yourselves, your wives, and your children. Yet long ye shall not have to suffer: behind the broad and fragrant leaf lurks the angel of death; his welcome breathes deadly fever into your blood. Sail on then! sail on over the swelling waves!"

And the pilgrims were glad as they listened to the nightingale's song, — that surely was of happy import!

The day shone forth from a light veil of mists. The country-folks were crossing the heath on their way to church. The women, in their black gowns and with the strip of white linen bound closely round their heads, seemed as if they had stepped out of old church pictures. Wide and dead lay the scene around — the withered heath, parched and murky plains, between white sand hills. The women, their prayer-books in their hands, were going their way to church. "O pray! pray ye for those who wander forth, pilgrims, to their grave, ye who abide on this side of the swelling waves!"

FIFTEENTH EVENING.

I knew a Punchinello, said the Moon. The folks all shouted whenever he made his appearance on the stage. All his movements were comical, and raised peals of laughter in the house, although there was nothing in particular to call it forth, — it was only his oddity. Even when a mere lad, romping

about with the other boys, he was a Punchinello. Nature formed him for the character, by putting a hump upon his back and another on his chest. But the mind that was concealed beneath this deformity was, on the contrary, richly endowed. No one possessed a deeper feeling, a more vigorous elasticity of spirit, than he. The stage was his world of ideals: had he been tall and handsome, every manager would have hailed him as his first tragedian. All that was heroic and great filled his soul, and still his lot was to be a Punchinello. His very sorrow, his melancholy, heightened the dry comicality of his sharply marked features, and aroused the laughter of a ticklish public, who applauded its favorite.

The lovely Columbine was good and kind to him, and yet she preferred to give her hand to Harlequin. It would indeed have been too comical a thing in reality if "Beauty and the Beast" had married. Whenever Punchinello was dejected, she was the only one who could bring a smile upon his face, but *she* could even make him laugh outright. At first she was melancholy like him, then somewhat calmer, and at last overflowing with fun. "I know well enough what ails you," she said; "it is love, and love alone!" And then he could not help laughing. "Love and I!" he exclaimed; "that would be droll indeed: how the folks would clap and shout!"

"It is love alone," she repeated with a comical pathos; "you love — you love me!"

Aye, people may speak thus when they imagine that in others' hearts there is no love. Punchinello skipped high into the air, and his melancholy was gone. And yet she had spoken the truth; he did love her; he loved her truly, fervently, as he loved all that was noble and beautiful in art. On her wedding-day he seemed the merriest of the merry; but in the night he wept; had the folks seen his wry face, they would have clapped their hands.

Not long ago Columbine died. On the day when she was buried, Harlequin had leave not to appear upon the boards, was he not a mourning widower? But the manager had to give something very merry, that the public might the less miss the pretty Columbine and the agile Harlequin. So the nimble Punchinello had to be doubly merry: he danced and

skipped about — despair in his heart — and all clapped their hands and cried, "Bravo, bravissimo!" Punchinello was called for. O, he was beyond all price!

Last night, after the performance, little Humpback strolled out of the town, toward the lonely church-yard. The wreath of flowers upon Columbine's grave had already faded. There he sat down — it was a perfect picture — his chin resting upon his hand, his eyes turned toward me — a Punchinello upon the grave, peculiar and comical. Had the folks seen their favorite, how they would have clapped and cried, "Bravo, Punchinello! bravo, bravissimo!"

SIXTEENTH EVENING.

Hear what the Moon related to me next. Often have I seen young officers, parading for the first time in their splendid uniform; I have seen maidens in their ball-dress; the handsome bride of a prince arrayed in her festal attire; but no joy to be compared to that which I witnessed last evening in a child, a little girl four years of age. She had received a present of a new little blue frock and a new rose-colored bonnet. The finery was already put on, and all present called out for candles, for the light of the moonbeams that shone in at the window was far too little. "Light, light!" was the cry. There stood the maiden as stiff as a doll — her little arms anxiously stretched out from the frock, and the fingers wide apart from each other; and O how her eyes and every feature beamed with joy!

"To-morrow you shall go out," said her mother. And the little girl looked up at her bonnet, then down at her frock, and smiled with rapture. "Mother," said she, "what will the dogs think when they see me in my smart dress?"

SEVENTEENTH EVENING.

I have told you of Pompeii, said the Moon, — the corpse of a city, now once more ranked in the catalogue of living cities. I know another far stranger still, which is no corpse, but in truth the phantom of a city. As the fountains splash and play in their marble basins, and the surge breaks upon the shore, I seem as it were to be listening to the tales and adventures of the floating city.

Upon the face of Ocean oft hangs a mist — her widow's veil. The Bridegroom of the Ocean is dead: his city and his citadel are but an empty mausoleum now. Knowest thou this city? In the streets was never heard the rattling of carriages, nor the clatter of the horse's hoof: fishes only swim there, and the black gondola skims like a spectre over the green waters.

I will show you the city's Piazza, her chief square, — continued the Moon, — and you may imagine yourself in fairy land. The grass springs up between the broad flagstones and in the morning dawn thousands of pigeons flutter around the isolated tower. Arcades surround you on three sides: beneath them sit the Turk, motionless, with his long pipe; the handsome young Greek, leaning against a pillar, looks up at the trophies placed aloft — at the tall masts, the monument of a bygone power, from which the flags hang down like mourning weepers. A maiden is sitting there to rest; she has set down her heavy pails of water, and the yoke by which she carried them is still upon her shoulders.

The edifice you see before you is no fairy castle, — it is a church. The gilded cupolas and the golden balls around it glitter in my light. Those magnificent bronze horses aloft have journeyed, like the bronze horses in the fairy tale: they have travelled into distant lands, and are now returned again. Seest thou the brilliant colors upon the walls and on the window-panes, as if at a child's entreaty some fairy had adorned this temple? Seest thou the winged lion upon yonder column? he glitters still of gold, but his wings are bound. The Lion is dead, for the Ocean King is dead. Void and desolate are the spacious halls, and where the splendid pictures once hung now gapes the bare walls. Beggars sleep beneath the arcades, on whose pavement the highest nobles alone were permitted to tread. From out the deep dungeons or the leaden chambers, near the Bridge of Sighs, a sigh sometimes escapes, where once the music of the tambourine in the gay gondola was heard, when from the gorgeous Bucentaur the wedding-ring was thrown into the Adriatic — the affianced Ocean Queen. Shroud thyself in mists, O Adriatic! draw the widow's veil around thy bosom, and enwrap thy bridegroom's sepulchre — marble, spectral Venice!

EIGHTEENTH EVENING.

I looked down upon a spacious theatre, said the Moon. The house was filled with spectators, for a new actor made his first appearance. My beam glided through a narrow window in the wall: a rouged face was pressed against the panes: it was the hero of the evening. The knightly beard curled around his chin, but tears stood in the man's eyes, for he had been hissed from the stage, and hissed indeed with reason. Poor fellow! but as times go nothing that is *poor* meets with tolerance in the realm of art. He had deep feeling, and loved art enthusiastically; but Art did not return his love.

The manager's bell again tinkled. In his part occurred these words: "Boldly and valiantly the hero advances." He had to advance indeed — before an audience, to whom he was the butt of ridicule.

When the piece was ended I saw a man, wrapped in a cloak, steal down the stairs: it was he, the condemned actor of the evening. The scene-shifters were whispering together. I followed the poor sinner to his garret. To hang one's self is an unseemly death, and poison is not always at hand. He was thinking of both. He looked at his pallid face in the glass, and peeped through his half-closed eyelids to see whether he should look well as a corpse. A man may be most unhappy and at the same time most affected. He thought of death, of suicide: I verily believe he even bewept his own death. He wept bitterly; and when a man has wept till he can weep no more, he no longer thinks of killing himself.

A year had passed, and again a play was acted, but upon a small stage, and by a company of poor itinerant players. Again I saw the well-known face, the rouged cheeks, the curling beard. Again he looked up at me, and smiled; and yet he had once more been hissed from the stage — hissed scarcely the minute before — hissed too upon a miserable stage, and by a mean and sorry audience.

That same evening a wretched hearse drove out of the gate of the town: no vehicle followed. It was the body of a suicide — it was our poor rouged and whiskered hero. The driver on the box was the only attendant; none followed —

none, but the Moon alone. In a corner by the church-yard wall the suicide lies buried: nettles will soon grow over the spot, and the grave-digger will fling upon it the weeds and thorns which he roots out from the other graves.

NINETEENTH EVENING.

I come from Rome, said the Moon. There in the middle of the city, upon one of the seven hills, stand the ruins of the imperial palace. The wild fig-tree grows in the clefts of the wall, and covers the naked masonry with its broad, gray-green leaves. Among heaps of rubbish the jackass treads upon the green laurels, and feeds on the barren thistle. Hither, to this spot, from whence the Roman eagles once flew forth over the wide world — came, saw, and conquered — a narrow entrance now conducts through a miserable clay hovel, wedged in between two broken marble columns. The tendrils of the vine hang down, like mourning wreaths, over the casement.

An old woman, with her little granddaughter, now dwell in the palace of the Cæsars, and show the place to strangers. A naked wall is all that remains of the splendid banquet-hall, and a dark cypress points with its long shadow to the spot where the throne once stood. The earth lies a yard deep upon the broken floor. The little girl, now daughter of the imperial palace, sits there in an evening upon her stool, listening to the vesper bell; or she peeps through the key-hole of a door close by, and looks over the half of Rome and the mighty cupola of St. Peter's.

All was still and silent as usual this evening, and the little girl was returning home in my full and clear light. Upon her head she carried an earthen pitcher of water, of antique form; she was barefooted, and her little petticoat and sleeves were torn. I kissed her finely rounded shoulders, her black eyes, and shining hair. She mounted the steep flight of steps up to the house, formed of the ruined fragments of the wall and a broken capital. The spotted lizards ran affrightedly past at her feet, but she was not startled. Her hand was raised to ring at the door. A hare's foot was suspended to a string — now the bell-rope to the imperial palace. She stood still for a moment: what might she be thinking of? Per-

chance of the beautiful image of the infant Jesus, clad in silver and gold, in the chapel below, where the silver lamps were burning, and the well-known vesper hymn was chanted. I know not. But again she went on, and stumbled: the earthen pitcher fell from her head, and broke upon the marble step. She burst into tears: the pretty daughter of the imperial palace wept over the paltry, broken clay pitcher. She stood there, barefooted, and wept, and dared not pull the string, the bell-rope of the imperial palace.

TWENTIETH EVENING.

The Moon had not shone for more than a fortnight: at last I saw her again, and she stood round and clear above the slowly rising mass of clouds. Hear what she told me.

I followed a caravan out of one of the towns of Fezzan. The people halted at a short distance from the sandy desert, upon a salt-plain, which glistened like a sheet of ice or a glacier, and was covered for a small extent only with the light drift-sand. The oldest man among them, at whose girdle hung the flask of water, and at whose head, when they rested, lay the sack of unleavened bread, — the venerable patriarch of the troop, — drew with his staff a square figure on the ground, and wrote in it some words from the Koran. The whole caravan passed over the spot thus consecrated. A young merchant, a son of the Sun — I saw it in his sparkling eye, I read it in the proud beauty of his form — rode pensively along upon his white, snorting steed. Was he thinking of his pretty young wife at home? Two days only had passed since she was carried, a lovely bride, around the walls of the city on the richly caparisoned camel, decked with costly furs and splendid shawls. In that sweet and festal hour the drums and bagpipes sounded, and the women sung, amidst rejoicing and the firing of guns, until the camel itself was excited by the sounds and the music.

But the young man, so lately married, was now journeying with the caravan far away into the desert. I escorted them on their way for many nights, and saw them rest beside the wells, under the palm-trees, which were half burnt up by the fierce rays of the sun. A camel dropped, and they plunged

the knife into its breast, and roasted the meat at the fire. My beams, which cooled the glowing sand, showed them at the same time the black rocks, dead islands in the vast sandy ocean. They encountered no hostile tribes upon their pathless road; no storms arose; no pillar of sand passed like a destroying angel over the caravan.

Meanwhile at home the lovely young wife prayed for her husband and her father. "Has ill befallen them?" she asked of my golden horn. "Are they dead?" she asked of my beaming orb.

The desert now lies behind them. This evening they are seated beneath the tall palm-trees; the crane flies around them flapping her long wings, and the pelican looks trustingly at them from out the boughs of the mimosa. The luxuriant underwood is trodden down by the heavy tramp of the elephant. A troop of negroes are returning from a market in the interior of the country: the women, with their indigo-blue aprons and their black hair decked with brass buttons, are driving the heavily laden oxen, upon which the naked black children are lying asleep. A negro leads by a rope a tame lion, caught young, which he has purchased.

They approach the caravan. The young merchant remains silent and motionless; he is thinking of his gentle wife; in the land of the Black he is dreaming of his fair and fragrant flower, far away beyond the desert: he raises his head. . . . .

A cloud passed before the Moon, and then another cloud. That evening I heard no more.

TWENTY–FIRST EVENING.

I saw a little girl weeping, said the Moon: she wept at the unkindness of the wicked world. A splendid doll had been given her; so pretty, so delicate, so elegant a doll, — surely she could never have been formed to bear a cross of any kind. But the little girl's brothers, like rude boys, had taken the doll, set it on a high branch of a tree in the garden, and then run away. Poor child! she could not get at her doll, nor help her down from her perilous seat; and this was just the reason why she wept. Doubtless the doll too wept, for she stretched out her arms imploringly through the thick green foliage

which formed her airy prison ; and it seemed as if a look of terror was pictured on her little cheek, which was usually so rosy and smiling, as she peeped through the leaves.

Yes, this was one of the *misfortunes of life*, of which Mamma so often spoke. Alas, poor doll ! the evening twilight was already coming on, and night would soon be here. Had the poor little creature to sit in the tree alone the whole night long, in the open air ? Ah, this the little girl could not bear. "I will stay with you ! " said she, though in truth she was not over-courageous. She already fancied that she saw the little Nixes with their tall, pointed caps, peeping from the bushes, and long, fearful ghosts dancing about in the alley of chestnut-trees, — then approaching nearer and nearer, stretching out their hands toward the tree on which the doll was hung, and pointing at her with a malicious grin. O, how the little maiden's heart quailed with fear ! "And yet," thought she, "if we have done nothing sinful, the evil spirits cannot harm us. But perhaps I have done some wrong ? " She reflected a moment. "Ah, yes indeed ! " she exclaimed in a penitent tone : "I laughed at the poor little duck with a red rag round its leg ; it limps so drolly — and I laughed at it ; but indeed I know how wrong it is to laugh at dumb animals." And she looked up at her doll. "Have *you* ever laughed at animals ? " she asked. And it had just the appearance as if the doll shook its head.

TWENTY–SECOND EVENING.

I looked down upon the Tyrol with a soft and saddened smile, said the Moon, and the pine-trees cast their deep shadows upon the rugged rocks. I beheld the colossal figures of St. Christopher, with the infant Jesus on his shoulder, pictured on the walls of the houses, and reaching from the ground up to the gable, — of St. Florian pouring water on the burning house, — and the figures of Christ upon the large road-side crosses.

High up, between two pointed summits of the western acclivity of the mountain range, stands a lonely nunnery, looking like a swallow's nest wedged in between the rocks. Two of the Sisters were above in the tower, tolling the bell :

they were both young, and they looked forth over the mountains into the wide world beyond. A travelling carriage rolled past on the road below; the postilion's horn sounded, and as the poor nuns looked down on it, their thoughts unconsciously followed the glance: a tear glistened in the eye of the younger sister. The horn was heard more and more faintly, until at length the convent bells silenced its dying sound.

TWENTY–THIRD EVENING.

Listen now to what the Moon related to me further.

It was many years ago, and in Copenhagen, that I one evening looked in at the window of a poorly furnished room. Father and mother were asleep, but their little son slept not. I saw the chintz bed-curtain move, and the blonde, curly head of the child peep out from behind it. At first I fancied that the boy was attracted by the great Bornholm house-clock, painted in splendid colors of red and green, with a magnificent cuckoo throned on the top; whilst the light pendulum, with its glittering brass plate, went incessantly tick, tack! tick, tack! as if in defiance of the heavy weights. It was not the clock, however, that the wakeful little fellow was watching so eagerly: his eye was fixed upon his mother's spinning-wheel, which stood beneath it. This was by far the most precious thing to him in the house; yet he dared not touch it, unless he wished to get a slap on the hand. He would sit by the hour together beside his mother while she spun, with his eyes riveted on the droning bobbins and the circling wheel; and at those moments he had always his own thoughts. Ah, if he were allowed only once to turn the spinning-wheel himself!

His father and mother were asleep: he looked first at them, and then at the tempting spinning-wheel. Presently one little naked foot stole out of bed, and then another: in a moment there he stood bolt upright in the room! Once more he turned round, to make quite sure that his father and mother slept on undisturbed: then he stole softly, very softly, with only his little shirt on, up to the object of his innocent childish longing, and began to spin. The cord flew off, but the wheel turned round the more quickly. I kissed his flaxen hair and his bright blue eyes: it was a pretty picture.

Suddenly his mother awoke. The bed-curtain moved; she peeped out, and involuntarily thought of the Nis or other little sprite. "In Jesus' name!" she groaned, jogging her husband in affright. He opened his eyes, rubbed them, and looked in astonishment at the industrious little fellow. "Why, that is our boy Bertel!" said he.

My eye turned from the narrow chamber, and in the same instant I looked down into the halls of the Vatican, where stand the marble statues of the gods. I lighted up the group of Laocoön: the stone appeared to sigh. I impressed my silent kiss upon the Muse's breast: I imagined that it heaved. But my beam rested longest on the Nile group, on the colossal figure of the god; leaning upon the Sphinx, there he lay, dreaming and thoughtful, as if musing on the years that had vanished in the lap of the Past. The little Cupids sported playfully with the crocodiles around him. In the huge cornucopia sat a tiny little one, with his arms crossed, and gazing at the stern and mighty River-god, half in awe and half in drollery, — the very picture of the little fellow at the spinning-wheel, with just the same sweetness of expression. A true and living grace shone in the beautiful little marble child; and yet, since it first came forth from the stone, the wheel of Time has revolved upon its axis more than a thousand times. And again it had to revolve, — as many turns as the boy gave to the spinning-wheel in the abode of poverty, — ere the world should once more witness marble gods like these.

Years passed on, continued the Moon. It was but yesterday that I looked down upon a bay on the eastern coast of Zealand, begirt with noble woods and high banks. There stands an old and stately chateau, surrounded by red walls, and with swans upon the waters of the moat: at a short distance lies a pretty little country town, with an old-fashioned church rising from the midst of fruitful orchards.

A number of little boats, with lights and torches, glided past in a line over the calm surface of the water. The scene was beyond measure solemn. Strains of music floated around — a festal song was sung; and in one of the boats stood a man who was the object of general homage — a tall figure, with a true northern air, a man of still gigantic vigor, not-

withstanding the approach of old age, with blue eyes, and long, white locks: there he stood, wrapt in the folds of a large Italian cloak. I knew him, and thought of the Nile group, and of the marble statues of the gods in the Vatican: I thought of the lowly chamber — I believe it was in the "Grönne-Gade" — where little Bertel, in his short and tight shirt, sat and spun. The wheel of Time has revolved: new gods have sprung forth from the marble. . . . . From boat to boat was heard a "Hurra!" — a "Hurra for Bertel Thorwaldsen!"

TWENTY–FOURTH EVENING.

I will give you a sketch from Frankfort, said the Moon. My glance was fixed upon *one* building. It was not Goethe's birthplace, nor was it the old town-hall, where may still be seen projecting through the grated windows the horned skulls of the oxen which were roasted at the coronation of the emperors and given to the people. The house had all the appearance of a burgher's dwelling, neat and comfortable, painted simply green, and without any mark of pretension: it stood close to the corner of the narrow "Juden-gasse," just at the limit of the dirty quarter of the Jews, — it was Rothschild's house.

I looked in at the open door. The staircase was brightly illuminated: there stood the livery servants, with wax-lights in massy silver candlesticks, bowing low before an aged woman, who was carried down the stairs in a sedan-chair. The master of the house stood by, with uncovered head, and imprinted a respectful kiss on the old lady's hand. It was his mother: she nodded to him affectionately, and then made a sign to the servants, who escorted her through the dark and narrow street to one of the meanest houses in this ill-reputed quarter of the town. Here she lived; here she had borne her children; from this spot had sprung and unfolded the magic flower of their fortunes. Were she now to leave the despised street and the crazy old house, who knows but that fortune might abandon them? This was her belief.

The Moon related no more: her visit to me was all too short this evening. But I thought on the old lady in the narrow street. A single word from her, and she had her mag-

nificent palace on the bank of the Thames, — one word from her, and there lay her villa on the Bay of Naples. "Were I to forsake the old house from which the fortunes of my sons have sprung, fortune might perchance forsake them!"

It may be a superstitious feeling; but it is a superstition of such a nature, that, to those who know the story and have the picture presented to them, one word of superscription will convey its full comprehension — *a Mother*.

TWENTY–FIFTH EVENING.

In the morning twilight of yesterday, said the Moon, I gazed on the chimneys of a large city, from which as yet no smoke arose. A little head popped up suddenly from one of them, and presently after half the body followed, whilst both arms rested upon the edge of the chimney. Hurra! It was a little sweep, who for the first time in his life had climbed to the very top of a chimney, and now popped out his head. "Hurra!" This was indeed something different from creeping about in the narrow flues and the little chimneys. The air was so fresh; he could look forth over the whole city, and to the green fields and woods beyond. The sun was just rising; round and large it shone into his face, which beamed with joy, although prettily begrimed with soot. "The whole city can see me now!" he cried; "and the moon can see me, and the sun too; hurra!" And again he waved his brush above his head.

TWENTY–SIXTH EVENING.

Yesternight, said the Moon, I looked down upon a city in China; my beams shone upon the long, naked walls which form the streets. Here and there indeed was a door, but it remained always shut; for what has the Chinese to do with the world without? Close blinds concealed the windows behind the street wall; and from the Temple alone a light shone faintly. I looked in, and surveyed leisurely the gorgeous sanctuary. From the floor to the ceiling the walls are painted with all kinds of ridiculous figures, in bright colors and richly gilt, mostly representing the actions of the gods upon earth; whilst in every niche stands the statue of a deity, almost

wholly concealed behind gaudy drapery and banners. Before each one of the gods (which are all of tin) is placed a little altar, with holy water, flowers, and burning wax-lights.

First in the temple stood Fu, the principal deity, arrayed in a silken robe of the sacred yellow color. At the foot of the altar sat a living form, a young priest, who seemed to be engaged in prayer; but in the midst of his devotions he apparently fell into a deep reverie, a sweet, pensive melancholy: surely he had some sinful thought, for his cheeks burned, and his head was bowed toward the ground. Poor Soui-houng! could it be that he was dreaming of his favorite little flower-bed, such as separates every Chinese house from the long street wall? and was the garden work in the open air so much pleasanter than sweeping the temple and snuffing the wax-tapers? or was he longing to be seated at the richly spread table, and wiping his mouth with silver paper between the courses? or was his sin so great, that, should he dare to confess it, the Celestial Empire must mercilessly punish him with death? or were his thoughts so bold as to follow the ships of the barbarians to their home, — far distant England? No, his thoughts wandered not so far, and yet they were as sinful as the warm passions of youth could make them; doubly sinful here in the temple, in the presence of the statues of Fu and the other holy deities. I know where his thoughts rested. At the further end of the city, upon the flat and flagged roof, where beautiful vases with large white bell-flowers stood ranged behind the porcelain-covered balustrade, sat the lovely Pe, with her roguishly pinched-in eyes, full lips, and the smallest foot in the world. The shoe pressed her foot, but at her heart there was a greater pressure still; and she raised her beautiful arms, rounded as if by the turner's lathe, and the satin rustled as she moved them. Before her stood a glass globe, in which were swimming four gold-fish. She stirred the water with a little parti-colored rod, varnished and shining — so gently, so slowly! for she was lost in thought. Was she thinking how brilliantly the gold-fish were clothed, how securely they lived in the glass globe, and how plentifully they were supplied with food, — and, notwithstanding, how many thousand times happier they would be at liberty? Her

thoughts strayed far from her father's house, to the temple, but not with reverence for the gods. Poor Pe! poor Souihoung! their earthly thoughts met, but my cold beam lay between them like a cherub's sword.

TWENTY–SEVENTH EVENING.

Perfect stillness brooded upon the ocean, said the Moon. The water was as transparent as the pure air through which I sailed, and deep beneath the surface of the waves I could discern the strange plants which, like giant trees of the forest, stretched upward their long stalks, whilst the fishes sported above their tops.

High aloft in the air a flock of wild swans were winging their flight toward the south. One of them sank exhausted down, down upon its wearied wing, whilst its eye followed longingly the aërial caravan as it receded in the distance. It kept its wings expanded wide, and sank gently, until at length it touched the surface of the waters. Its head inclined backwards, enfolded in its wings, and there it lay motionless, like the white lotus-flower upon the peaceful lake.

Gradually the breeze sprung up, and fanned the surface of the water, which rippled, sparkling brilliantly, until by degrees it curled up in large and crested waves. And anew the swan raised up its head, whilst in fine spray the water plashed over its breast and back. The breaking day tinged the clouds with purple: with new vigor the swan shook its plumage, and mounted upward with quick strokes of its wings. It flew to meet the rising sun, in the direction of the coast, which blended with the blue horizon: thither the aërial caravan had gone before; but the swan held on its course alone, with longing in its breast: onward it flew, but alone, over the blue and swelling deep.

TWENTY–EIGHTH EVENING.

I will give you another sketch from Sweden, said the Moon. In the midst of a dark pine forest, close to the gloomy bank of the Roxe, lies the old convent-church of Wreta. My beams glided through the grating in the wall, into the spacious vault, where monarchs sleep in large stone coffins. Upon

the mouldering wall above glitters a kingly crown, the symbol of earthly glory: but it is of wood, painted and gilded, and hung upon a wooden peg. The worm has eaten through the wood, and the spider has spun her web from the crown to the coffin, like a mourning veil, heavy with grief, and yet so passing light and frail, as sorrow itself is not unwont to be.

How peacefully they slumber — the once mighty monarchs of this changeful world! I can still see the proud smile around the lips, upon whose mandate hung the issues of joy or of grief.

As the steamboat, like a magic bark, winds its course among the mountains, the stranger oft makes a pilgrimage to the lonely church in the forest. He gazes with amazement on this ghastly sepulchral vault, and inquires the names of the kings; but they fall on his ear as an empty and forgotten sound. He looks with a smile at the worm-eaten crowns; and if perchance he is of a pious spirit, a feeling of sadness is reflected in his smile. Slumber on, ye dead! the Moon still holds you in fresh remembrance, and by night she sends her cold ray into the gloomy chamber of your silent realm.

TWENTY–NINTH EVENING.

By the road-side stands an inn, said the Moon, where the wagoner stops to bait his horses, and opposite to it is a large cart-shed. The thatched roof is in parts worn away by time, and I looked down through the openings between the rafters into the cheerless shed. The turkey-cock sat asleep upon a perch under the trap-door of the hay-loft, and the saddle lay in the empty manger.

In the middle of the shed stood an old-fashioned, shut-up travelling-carriage; the gentlefolks inside were taking their nap in easy security, whilst the horses were baited, and the coachman indulged in stretching his legs, albeit (as I know full well) he had already enjoyed a comfortable doze for more than half the journey. The door of the hostler's chamber stood open; the bed looked as if turned topsy-turvy, and a tallow-candle, carelessly placed on the boards, was burning in the socket of a dirty iron-wire candlestick. The wind blew cold through the rafters of the shed, and the dawn was coming

on. In one of the side stalls a family of poor itinerant musicians had lain down to rest for the night upon the broken pavement, over which a little straw was shaken down. The father and mother were probably dreaming of the burning contents of the glass ; but the pale little girl dreamed of the burning tears in her eye. At their head lay a harp, at their feet the dog.

THIRTIETH EVENING.

I will tell you a circumstance which occurred a year ago, said the Moon, in a country town in the south of Germany. The master of a dancing-bear was sitting in the tap-room of an inn, eating his supper ; whilst the bear, poor harmless beast ! was tied up behind the woodstack in the yard.

In the room up-stairs three little children were playing about. Tramp, tramp ! was suddenly heard on the stairs : who could it be ? The door flew open, and enter — the bear, the huge, shaggy beast with its clanking chain ! Tired of standing so long in the yard alone, Bruin had at length found his way to the staircase. At first the little children were in a terrible fright at this unexpected visit, and each ran into a corner to hide himself. But the bear found them all out, put his muzzle, snuffling, up to them, but did not harm them in the least. He must be a big dog, thought the children ; and they began to stroke him familiarly. The bear stretched himself out at his full length upon the floor, and the youngest boy rolled over him, and nestled his curly head in the shaggy, black fur of the beast. Then the eldest boy went and fetched his drum, and thumped away on it with might and main ; whereupon the bear stood erect upon his hind legs, and began to dance. What glorious fun ! Each boy shouldered his musket ; the bear must of course have one too, and he held it tight and firm, like any soldier. There's a comrade for you, my lads ! and away they marched — one, two, — one, two !

The door suddenly opened, and the children's mother entered. You should have seen her — speechless with terror, her cheeks white as a sheet, and her eyes fixed with horror. But the youngest boy nodded with a look of intense delight, and cried, " Mamma, we are only playing at soldiers ! " At that moment the master of the bear appeared.

LITTLE TUK.

YES, that was little Tuk: his name was not really Tuk; but when he could not speak plainly, he used to call himself so. It was to mean "Charley;" and it does very well if one only knows it. Now, he was to take care of his little sister Gustava, who was much smaller than he, and at the same time he was to learn his lesson; but these two things would not suit well together. The poor boy sat there with his little sister on his lap, and sang her all kinds of songs that he knew, and every now and then he gave a glance at the geography-book that lay open before him; by to-morrow morning he was to know all the towns in Zealand by heart, and to know everything about them that one can well know.

Now his mother came home, for she had been out, and took little Gustava in her arms. Tuk ran quickly to the window, and read so zealously that he had almost read his eyes out, for it became darker and darker; but his mother had no money to buy candles.

"There goes the old washerwoman out of the lane yonder," said his mother, as she looked out of the window. "The poor woman can hardly drag herself along, and now she has to carry the pail of water from the well. Be a good boy, Tuk, and run across, and help the old woman. Won't you?"

And Tuk ran across quickly, and helped her; but when he came back into the room it had become quite dark. There was nothing said about a candle, and now he had to go to bed, and his bed was an old settle. There he lay, and thought of his geography lesson, and of Zealand, and of all the master had said. He ought certainly to have read it again, but he could not do that. So he put the geography-book under his pillow, because he had heard that this is a very good way to learn one's lesson; but one cannot depend upon it. There he lay, and thought and thought; and all at once he fancied

some one kissed him upon his eyes and mouth. He slept, and yet he did not sleep; it was just as if the old washerwoman were looking at him with her kind eyes, and saying, —

"It would be a great pity if you did not know your lesson to-morrow. You have helped me, therefore now I will help you; and Providence will help us both."

All at once the book began to crawl, crawl about under Tuk's pillow.

"Kikeliki! Put! put!" It was a Hen that came crawling up, and she came from Kjöge. "I'm a Kjöge hen!"[1] she said.

And then she told him how many inhabitants were in the town, and about the battle that had been fought there, though that was really hardly worth mentioning.

"Kribli, kribli, plumps!" Something fell down: it was a wooden bird, the Parrot from the shooting match at Prästö. He said that there were just as many inhabitants yonder as he had nails in his body; and he was very proud. "Thorwaldsen lived close to me.[2] Plumps! Here I lie very comfortably."

But now little Tuk no longer lay in bed; on a sudden he was on horseback. Gallop, gallop! hop, hop! and so he went on. A splendidly attired knight, with flowing plume, held him on the front of his saddle, and so they went riding on through the wood of the old town of Wordingborg, and that was a great and very busy town. On the King's castle rose high towers, and the radiance of lights streamed from every window; within was song and dancing, and King Waldemar and the young gayly dressed maids of honor danced together. Now the morning came on, and so soon as the sun appeared the whole city and the King's castle suddenly sank down, one tower falling after another; and at last only one remained standing on the hill where the castle had formerly

[1] Kjöge, a little town on Kjöge Bay. Lifting up children by putting the two hands to the sides of their heads is called "showing them Kjöge hens."

[2] Prästö, a still smaller town. A few hundred paces from it lies the estate of Nysö, where Thorwaldsen usually lived while he was in Denmark, and where he executed many immortal works.

been ;[1] and the town was very small and poor, and the school-boys came with their books under their arms, and said, "Two thousand inhabitants ;" but that was not true, for the town had not so many.

And little Tuk lay in his bed, as if he dreamed, and yet as if he did not dream ; but some one stood close beside him.

"Little Tuk ! little Tuk !" said the voice. It was a sea-man, quite a little personage, as small as if he had been a cadet ; but he was not a cadet. "I'm to bring you a greeting from Corsör ;[2] that is a town which is just in good progress — a lively town that has steamers and mail coaches. In times past they used always to call it ugly, but that is now no longer true.

"'I lie by the sea-shore,' said Corsör. 'I have high-roads and pleasure gardens ; and I gave birth to a poet who was witty and entertaining, and that cannot be said of all of them. I wanted once to fit out a ship that was to sail round the world ; but I did not do that, though I might have done it. But I smell deliciously, for close to my gates the loveliest roses bloom.'"

Little Tuk looked, and it seemed red and green before his eyes ; but when the confusion of color had a little passed by, it changed all at once into a wooded declivity close by a bay, and high above it stood a glorious old church with two high pointed towers. Out of this hill flowed springs of water in thick columns, so that there was a continual splashing, and close by sat an old King with a golden crown upon his white head : that was King Hroar of the springs, close by the town of Roeskilde, as it is now called. And up the hill into the old church went all the Kings and Queens of Denmark, hand in hand, all with golden crowns ; and the organ played, and the springs plashed. Little Tuk saw all and heard all.

[1] Wordingborg, in King Waldemar's time a considerable town, now a place of no importance. Only a lonely tower and a few remains of a wall show where the castle once stood.

[2] Corsör, on the Great Belt, used to be called the most tiresome of Danish towns before the establishment of steamers : for in those days travellers had often to wait there for a favorable wind. The poet Baggesen was born there.

"Don't forget the towns,"[1] said King Hroar.

At once everything had vanished, and whither? It seemed to him like turning a leaf in a book. And now stood there an old peasant woman, who came from Sorö, where grass grows in the market-place; she had an apron of gray cotton thrown over her head and shoulders, and the apron was very wet; it must have been raining.

"Yes, that it has!" said she; and she knew many pretty things out of Holberg's plays, and about Waldemar and Absalom. But all at once she cowered down, and wagged her head as if she were about to spring. "Koax!" said she; "it is wet! it is wet! There is a very agreeable death-silence in Sorö!"[2] Now she changed all at once into a frog — "Koax!" — and then she became an old woman again. "One must dress according to the weather," she said. "It is wet! it is wet! My town is just like a bottle: one goes in at the cork, and must come out again at the cork. In old times I had capital fish, and now I've fresh red-cheeked boys in the bottom of the bottle, and they learn wisdom — Hebrew, Greek. — Koax!"

That sounded just like the croak of the frogs, or the sound of some one marching across the moor in great boots; always the same note, so monotonous and wearisome that little Tuk fairly fell asleep, and that could not hurt him at all.

But even in this sleep came a dream, or whatever it was. His little sister Gustava, with the blue eyes and the fair curly hair, was all at once a tall slender maiden, and without having wings she could fly; and now they flew over Zealand, over the green forests and the blue lakes.

"Do you hear the cock crow, little Tuk? Kikeliki! The fowls are flying up out of Kjöge! You shall have a poultry-yard — a great, great poultry-yard! You shall not suffer hun-

[1] Roeskilde (Roesquelle, *Rose-spring*, falsely called Rothschild), once the capital of Denmark. The town took its name from King Hroar and from the many springs in the vicinity. In the beautiful cathedral most of the kings and queens of Denmark are buried. In Roeskilde the Danish Estates used to assemble.

[2] Sorö, a very quiet little town, in a fine situation, surrounded by forests and lakes. Holberg, the Molière of Denmark, here founded a noble academy. The poets Hauch and Ingemann were professors here.

ger nor need; and you shall hit the bird, as the saying is you shall become a rich and happy man. Your house shall rise up like King Waldemar's tower, and shall be richly adorned with marble statues, like those of Prästö. You understand me well. Your name shall travel with fame round the whole world, like the ship that was to sail from Corsör."

"Don't forget the towns," said King Hroar. "You will speak well and sensibly, little Tuk; and when at last you descend to your grave, you shall sleep peacefully" —

"As if I lay in Sorö," said Tuk, and he awoke. It was bright morning, and he could not remember his dream. But that was not necessary, for one must not know what is to happen.

Now he sprang quickly out of his bed, and read his book, and all at once he knew his whole lesson. The old washerwoman, too, put her head in at the door, nodded to him in a friendly way, and said, —

"Thank you, you good child, for your help. May your beautiful dreams come true!"

Little Tuk did not know at all what he had dreamed, but there was One above who knew it.

IB AND CHRISTINE.

NOT far from the clear stream Gudenau, in North Jutland, in the forest which extends by its banks and far into the country, a great ridge of land rises and stretches along like a wall through the wood. By this ridge, westward, stands a farm-house, surrounded by poor land; the sandy soil is seen through the spare rye and wheat-ears that grow upon it. Some years have elapsed since the time of which we speak. The people who lived here cultivated the fields, and moreover kept three sheep, a pig, and two oxen; in fact, they supported themselves quite comfortably, for they had enough to live on if they took things as they came. Indeed, they could have managed to save enough to keep two horses; but, like the other peasants of the neighborhood, they said, "The horse eats itself up" — that is to say, it eats as much as it earns. Jeppe-Jäns cultivated his field in summer. In the winter he made wooden shoes, and then he had an assistant, a journeyman, who understood as well as he himself did how to make the wooden shoes strong, and light, and graceful. They carved shoes and spoons, and that brought in money. It would have been wronging the Jeppe-Jänses to call them poor people.

Little Ib, a boy seven years old, the only child of the family, would sit by, looking at the workmen, cutting at a stick, and occasionally cutting his finger. But one day Ib succeeded so well with two pieces of wood, that they really looked like little wooden shoes; and these he wanted to give to little Christine. And who was little Christine? She was the boatman's daughter, and was as graceful and delicate as a gentleman's child; had she been differently dressed, no one would have imagined that she came out of the hut on the neighboring heath. There lived her father, who was a widower, and supported himself by carrying fire-wood in his great boat out of the forest to the

estate of Silkeborg, with its great eel-pond and eel-weir, and sometimes even to the distant little town of Randers. He had no one who could take care of little Christine, and therefore the child was almost always with him in his boat, or in the forest among the heath plants and barberry bushes. Sometimes, when he had to go as far as the town, he would bring little Christine, who was a year younger than Ib, to stay at the Jeppe-Jänses.

Ib and Christine agreed very well in every particular: they divided their bread and berries when they were hungry, they dug in the ground together for treasures, and they ran, and crept, and played about everywhere. And one day they ventured together up the high ridge, and a long way into the forest; once they found a few snipe's eggs there, and that was a great event for them.

Ib had never been on the heath where Christine's father lived, nor had he ever been on the river. But even this was to happen; for Christine's father once invited him to go with them, and on the evening before the excursion, he followed the boatman over the heath to the house of the latter.

Next morning early, the two children were sitting high up on the pile of fire-wood in the boat, eating bread and whistleberries. Christine's father and his assistant propelled the boat with staves. They had the current with them, and swiftly they glided down the stream, through the lakes it forms in its course, and which sometimes seemed shut in by reeds and water plants, though there was always room for them to pass, and though the old trees bent quite forward over the water, and the old oaks bent down their bare branches, as if they had turned up their sleeves, and wanted to show their knotty naked arms. Old elder-trees, which the stream had washed away from the bank, clung with their fibrous roots to the bottom of the stream, and looked like little wooded islands. The water-lilies rocked themselves on the river. It was a splendid excursion; and at last they came to the great eel-weir, where the water rushed through the flood-gates; and Ib and Christine thought this was beautiful to behold.

In those days there was no manufactory there, nor was there any town: only the old great farm-yard, with its scanty

fields, with few servants and a few head of cattle, could be seen there; and the rushing of the water through the weir and the cry of the wild ducks were the only signs of life in Silkeborg. After the fire-wood had been unloaded, the father of Christine bought a whole bundle of eels and a slaughtered sucking pig, and all was put into a basket and placed in the stern of the boat. Then they went back again up the stream; but the wind was favorable, and when the sails were hoisted it was as good as if two horses had been harnessed to the boat.

When they had arrived at a point in the stream where the assistant boatman dwelt, a little way from the bank, the boat was moored, and the two men landed, after exhorting the children to sit still. But the children did not do that, or at least they obeyed only for a very short time. They must be peeping into the basket in which the eels and the sucking pig had been placed, and they must needs pull the sucking pig out, and take it in their hands, and feel and touch it all over; and as both wanted to hold it at the same time, it came to pass that they let it fall into the water, and the sucking pig drifted away with the stream — and here was a terrible event!

Ib jumped ashore, and ran a little distance along the bank, and Christine sprang after him.

"Take me with you!" she cried.

And in a few minutes they were deep in the thicket, and could no longer see either the boat or the bank. They ran on a little farther, and then Christine fell down on the ground and began to cry; but Ib picked her up.

"Follow me!" he cried. "Yonder lies the house."

But the house was not yonder. They wandered on and on, over the dry, rustling, last year's leaves, and over fallen branches that crackled beneath their feet. Soon they heard a loud piercing scream. They stood still and listened, and presently the scream of an eagle sounded through the wood. It was an ugly scream, and they were frightened at it; but before them, in the thick wood, the most beautiful blueberries grew in wonderful profusion. They were so inviting that the children could not do otherwise than stop; and they lingered for some time, eating the blueberries till they had quite blue

mouths and blue cheeks. Now again they heard the cry they had heard before.

"We shall get into trouble about the pig," said Christine.

"Come, let us go to our house," said Ib; "it is here in the wood."

And they went forward. They presently came to a wood, but it did not lead them home; and darkness came on, and they were afraid. The wonderful stillness that reigned around was interrupted now and then by the shrill cries of the great horrid owl and of the birds that were strange to them. At last they both lost themselves in a thicket. Christine cried, and Ib cried too; and after they had bemoaned themselves for a time, they threw themselves down on the dry leaves, and went fast asleep.

The sun was high in the heavens when the two children awoke. They were cold; but in the neighborhood of this resting-place, on the hill, the sun shone through the trees, and there they thought they would warm themselves; and from there Ib fancied they would be able to see his parents' house. But they were far away from the house in question, in quite another part of the forest. They clambered to the top of the rising ground, and found themselves on the summit of a slope running down to the margin of a transparent lake. They could see fish in great numbers in the pure water illumined by the sun's rays. This spectacle was quite a sudden surprise for them; but close beside them grew a nut bush covered with the finest nuts; and now they picked the nuts, and cracked them, and ate the delicate young kernels, which had only just become perfect. But there was another surprise and another fright in store for them. Out of the thicket stepped a tall old woman: her face was quite brown, and her hair was deep black and shining. The whites of her eyes gleamed like a negro's; on her back she carried a bundle, and in her hand she bore a knotted stick. She was a gypsy. The children did not at once understand what she said. She brought three nuts out of her pocket, and told them that in these nuts the most beautiful, the loveliest things were hidden, for they were wishing-nuts.

Ib looked at her, and she seemed so friendly, that he plucked

up courage and asked her if she would give him the nuts; and the woman gave them to him, and gathered some more for herself, a whole pocketful, from the nut bush.

And Ib and Christine looked at the wishing-nuts with great eyes.

"Is there a carriage with a pair of horses in this nut?" he asked.

"Yes, there's a golden carriage with two horses," answered the woman.

"Then give me the nut," said little Christine.

And Ib gave it to her, and the strange woman tied it in her pocket-handkerchief for her.

"Is there in this nut a pretty little neckerchief, like the one Christine wears round her neck?" inquired Ib.

"There are ten neckerchiefs in it," answered the woman. "There are beautiful dresses in it, and stockings, and a hat with a veil."

"Then I will have that one too," cried little Christine.

And Ib gave her the second nut also. The third was a little black thing.

"That one you can keep," said Christine; "and it is a pretty one too."

"What is in it?" inquired Ib.

"The best of all things for you," replied the gypsy woman.

And Ib held the nut very tight. The woman promised to lead the children into the right path, so that they might find their way home; and now they went forward, certainly in quite a different direction from the path they should have followed. But that is no reason why we should suspect the gypsy woman of wanting to steal the children. In the wild wood-path they met the forest bailiff, who knew Ib; and by his help, Ib and Christine both arrived at home, where their friends had been very anxious about them. They were pardoned and forgiven, although they had indeed both deserved "to get into trouble;" firstly, because they had let the sucking pig fall into the water, and secondly, because they had run away.

Christine was taken back to her father on the heath, and Ib remained in the farm-house on the margin of the wood by the

great ridge. The first thing he did in the evening was to bring forth out of his pocket the little black nut, in which "the best thing of all" was said to be inclosed. He placed it carefully in the crack of the door, and then shut the door so as to break the nut; but there was not much kernel in it. The nut looked as if it were filled with tobacco or black rich earth; it was what we call hollow, or worm-eaten.

"Yes, that's exactly what I thought," said Ib. "How could the very best thing be contained in this little nut? And Christine will get just as little out of her two nuts, and will have neither fine clothes nor the golden carriage."

And winter came on, and the new year began; indeed, several years went by.

Ib was at last to be confirmed; and for this reason he went during a whole winter to the clergyman, far away in the nearest village, to prepare. About this time the boatman one day visited Ib's parents, and told them that Christine was now going into service, and that she had been really fortunate in getting a remarkably good place, and falling into worthy hands.

"Only think!" he said; "she is going to the rich innkeeper's, in the inn at Herning, far toward the west, many miles from here. She is to assist the hostess in keeping the house; and afterward, if she takes to it well, and stays to be confirmed there, the people are going to adopt her as their own daughter."

And Ib and Christine took leave of one another. People called them "the betrothed;" and at parting the girl showed Ib that she had still the two nuts that he had given her long ago, during their wanderings in the forest; and she told him, moreover, that in a drawer she had carefully kept the little wooden shoes which he had carved as a present for her in their childish days. And thereupon they parted.

Ib was confirmed. But he remained in his mother's house, for he had become a clever maker of wooden shoes, and in summer he looked after the field. He did it all alone, for his mother kept no farm-servant, and his father had died long ago.

Only seldom he got news of Christine from some passing postilion or eel-fisher. But she was well off at the rich innkeeper's ; and after she had been confirmed, she wrote a letter to her father, and sent a kind message to Ib and his mother ; and in the letter there was mention made of certain linen garments and a fine new gown, which Christine had received as a present from her employers. This was certainly good news.

Next spring, there was a knock one day at the door of our Ib's old mother, and behold, the boatman and Christine stepped into the room. She had come on a visit to spend a day : a carriage had to come from the Herning Inn to the next village, and she had taken the opportunity to see her friends once again. She looked as handsome as a real lady, and she had a pretty gown on, which had been well sewn, and made expressly for her. There she stood, in grand array, and Ib was in his working clothes. He could not utter a word : he certainly seized her hand, and held it fast in his own, and was heartily glad ; but he could not get his tongue to obey him. Christine was not embarrassed, however, for she went on talking and talking, and, moreover, kissed Ib on his mouth in the heartiest manner.

"Did you know me again directly, Ib?" she asked ; but even afterward, when they were quite left by themselves, and he stood there still holding her hand in his, he could only say, —

"You look quite like a real lady, and I am so uncouth. How often I have thought of you, Christine, and of the old times!"

And arm in arm they sauntered up the great ridge, and looked across the stream toward the heath, toward the great hills overgrown with bloom. It was perfectly silent ; but by the time they parted it had grown quite clear to him that Christine must be his wife. Had they not, even in their childhood, been called the betrothed pair? To him they seemed to be really engaged to each other, though neither of them had spoken a word on the subject. Only for a few more hours could they remain together, for Christine was obliged to go back into the next village, from whence the carriage

was to start early next morning for Herning. Her father and Ib escorted her as far as the village. It was a fair moonlight evening, and when they reached their destination, and Ib still held Christine's hand in his own, he could not make up his mind to let her go. His eyes brightened, but still the words came halting over his lips. Yet they came from the depths of his heart, when he said, —

"If you have not become too grand, Christine, and if you can make up your mind to live with me in my mother's house as my wife, we must become a wedded pair some day; but we can wait a while yet."

"Yes, let us wait for a time, Ib," she replied; and he kissed her lips. "I confide in you, Ib," said Christine; "and I think that I love you — but I will sleep upon it."

And with that they parted. And on the way home Ib told the boatman that he and Christine were as good as betrothed; and the boatman declared he had always expected it would turn out so; and he went home with Ib, and remained that night in the young man's house; but nothing further was said of the betrothal.

A year passed by, in the course of which two letters were exchanged between Ib and Christine. The signature was prefaced by the words, "Faithful till death!" One day the boatman came in to Ib, and brought him a greeting from Christine. What he had further to say was brought out in a somewhat hesitating fashion, but it was to the effect that Christine was almost more than prosperous, for she was a pretty girl, courted and loved. The son of the host had been home on a visit; he was employed in the office of some great institution in Copenhagen; and he was very much pleased with Christine, and she had taken a fancy to him: his parents were ready to give their consent, but Christine was very anxious to retain Ib's good opinion; "and so she had thought of refusing this great piece of good fortune," said the boatman.

At first Ib said not a word, but he became as white as the wall, and slightly shook his head. Then he said slowly, —

"Christine must not refuse this advantageous offer."

"Then do you write a few words to her," said the boatman.

And Ib sat down to write; but he could not manage it

well: the words would not come as he wished them; and first he altered and then he tore up the page; but the next morning a letter lay ready to be sent to Christine, and it contained the following words: —

"I have read the letter you have sent to your father, and gather from it that you are prospering in all things, and that there is a prospect of higher fortune for you. Ask your heart, Christine, and ponder well the fate that awaits you, if you take me for your husband; what I possess is but little. Do not think of me, or my position, but think of your own welfare. You are bound to me by no promise, and if in your heart you have given me one, I release you from it. May all treasures of happiness be poured out upon you, Christine. Heaven will console me in its own good time.

"Ever your sincere friend, IB."

And the letter was dispatched, and Christine duly received it.

In the course of that November her banns were published in the church on the heath, and in Copenhagen, where her bridegroom lived; and to Copenhagen she proceeded, under the protection of her future mother-in-law, because the bridegroom could not undertake the journey into Jutland on account of his various occupations. On the journey, Christine met her father in a certain village, and here the two took leave of one another. A few words were mentioned concerning this fact, but Ib made no remark upon it: his mother said he had grown very silent of late; indeed, he had become very pensive, and thus the three nuts came into his mind which the gypsy woman had given him long ago, and of which he had given two to Christine. Yes, it seemed right — they were wishing-nuts, and in one of them lay a golden carriage with two horses, and in the other very elegant clothes; all those luxuries would now be Christine's in the capital. Her part had thus come true. And to him, Ib, the nut had offered only black earth. The gypsy woman had said this was "the best thing of all for him." Yes, it was right — that also was coming true. The black earth was the best for him. Now he

understood clearly what had been the woman's meaning. In the black earth, in the dark grave, would be the best happiness for him.

And once again years passed by, not very many, but they seemed long years to Ib. The old innkeeper and his wife died, and the whole of their property, many thousands of dollars, came to the son. Yes, now Christine could have the golden carriage and plenty of fine clothes.

During the long two years that followed no letter came from Christine; and when her father at length received one from her, it was not written in prosperity, by any means. Poor Christine! neither she nor her husband had understood how to keep the money together, and there seemed to be no blessing with it, because they had not sought it.

And again the heather bloomed and faded. The winter had swept for many years across the heath, and over the ridge beneath which Ib dwelt, sheltered from the rough winds. The spring sun shone bright, and Ib guided the plough across his field, when one day it glided over what appeared to be a fire stone. Something like a great black ship came out of the ground, and when Ib took it up it proved to be a piece of metal; and the place from which the plough had cut the stone gleamed brightly with ore. It was a great golden armlet of ancient workmanship that he had found. He had disturbed a "Hun's grave," and discovered the costly treasure buried in it. Ib showed what he had found to the clergyman, who explained its value to him, and then he betook himself to the local judges, who reported the discovery to the keeper of the museum, and recommended Ib to deliver up the treasure in person.

"You have found in the earth the best thing you could find," said the judge.

"The best thing!" thought Ib. "The very best thing for me, and found in the earth! Well, if that is the best, the gypsy woman was correct in what she prophesied to me."

So Ib travelled with the ferry-boat from Aarhus to Copenhagen. To him, who had but once or twice passed beyond the river that rolled by his home, this seemed like a voyage across the ocean. And he arrived in Copenhagen.

The value of the gold he had found was paid over to him ; it was a large sum — six hundred dollars. And Ib of the heath wandered about in the great capital.

On the day on which he had settled to go back with the captain, Ib lost his way in the streets, and took quite a different direction from the one he intended to follow. He had wandered into the suburb of Christianshaven, into a poor little street. Not a human being was to be seen. At last a very little girl came out of one of the wretched houses. Ib inquired of the little one the way to the street which he wanted ; but she looked shyly at him, and began to cry bitterly. He asked her what ailed her, but could not understand what she said in reply. But as they went along the street together, they passed beneath the light of a lamp ; and when the light fell on the girl's face, he felt a strange and sharp emotion, for Christine stood bodily before him, just as he remembered her from the days of his childhood.

And he went with the little maiden into the wretched house, and ascended the narrow, crazy staircase, which led to a little attic chamber in the roof. The air in this chamber was heavy and almost suffocating : no light was burning ; but there was heavy sighing and moaning in one corner. Ib struck a light with the help of a match. It was the mother of the child who lay sighing on the miserable bed.

"Can I be of any service to you ?" asked Ib. "This little girl has brought me up here, but I am a stranger in this city. Are there no neighbors or friends whom I could call to you ?" And he raised the sick woman's head, and smoothed her pillow.

It was Christine of the heath !

For years her name had not been mentioned yonder, for the mention of her would have disturbed Ib's peace of mind, and rumor had told nothing good concerning her. The wealth which her husband had inherited from his parents had made him proud and arrogant. He had given up his certain appointment, had travelled for half a year in foreign lands, and on his return had incurred debts, and yet lived in an expensive fashion. His carriage had bent over more and more, so to speak, until at last it turned over completely. The

many merry companions and table-friends he had entertained declared it served him right, for he had kept house like a madman; and one morning his corpse was found in the canal.

The icy hand of death was already on Christine. Her youngest child, only a few weeks old, expected in prosperity and born in misery, was already in its grave, and it had come to this with Christine herself, that she lay sick to death and forsaken, in a miserable room, amid a poverty that she might well have borne in her childish days, but which now oppressed her painfully, since she had been accustomed to better things. It was her eldest child, also a little Christine, that here suffered hunger and poverty with her, and whom Ib had now brought home.

"I am unhappy at the thought of dying and leaving the poor child here alone," she said. "Ah, what is to become of the poor thing?" And not a word more could she utter.

And Ib brought out another match, and lighted up a piece of candle he found in the room, and the flame illumined the wretched dwelling. And Ib looked at the little girl, and thought how Christine had looked when she was young; and he felt that for her sake he would be fond of this child, which was as yet a stranger to him. The dying woman gazed at him, and her eyes opened wider and wider: did she recognize him? He never knew, for no further word passed over her lips.

And it was in the forest by the River Gudenau, in the region of the heath. The air was thick and dark, and there were no blossoms on the heath plant; but the autumn tempests whirled the yellow leaves from the wood into the stream, and out over the heath toward the hut of the boatman, in which strangers now dwelt; but beneath the ridge, safe beneath the protection of the trees, stood the little farm-house, trimly whitewashed and painted, and within it the turf blazed up cheerily in the chimney; for within was sunlight, the beaming sunlight of a child's two eyes; and the tones of the spring birds sounded in the words that came from the child's rosy lips: she sat on Ib's knee, and Ib was to her both father and

mother, for her own parents were dead, and had vanished from her as a dream vanishes alike from children and grown men. Ib sat in the pretty neat house, for he was a prosperous man, while the mother of the little girl rested in the church-yard at Copenhagen, where she had died in poverty.

Ib had money, and was said to have provided for the future. He had won gold out of the black earth, and he had a Christine for his own, after all.

FIVE OUT OF ONE SHELL.

THERE were five peas in one shell: they were green, and the pod was green, and so they thought all the world was green; and that was just as it should be! The shell grew, and the peas grew; they accommodated themselves to circumstances, sitting all in a row. The sun shone without, and warmed the husk, and the rain made it clear and transparent; it was mild and agreeable in the bright day and in the dark night, just as it should be, and the peas as they sat there became bigger and bigger, and more and more thoughtful, for something they must do.

"Are we to sit here everlastingly?" asked one. "I'm afraid we shall become hard by long sitting. It seems to me there must be something outside: I have a kind of inkling of it."

And weeks went by. The peas became yellow, and the pod also.

"All the world's turning yellow," said they; and they had a right to say it.

Suddenly they felt a tug at the shell. The shell was torn off, passed through human hands, and glided down into the pocket of a jacket, in company with other full pods.

"Now we shall soon be opened!" they said; and that is just what they were waiting for.

"I should like to know who of us will get farthest!" said the smallest of the five. "Yes, now it will soon show itself."

"What is to be will be," said the biggest.

"Crack!" the pod burst, and all the five peas rolled out into the bright sunshine. There they lay in a child's hand. A little boy was clutching them, and said they were fine peas for his pea-shooter; and he put one in directly and shot it out.

"Now I'm flying out into the wide world, catch me if you can!" And he was gone.

"I," said the second, "I shall fly straight into the sun. That's a shell worth looking at, and one that exactly suits me." And away he went.

"We'll go to sleep wherever we arrive," said the two next, "but we shall roll on all the same." And they certainly rolled and tumbled down on the ground before they got into the pea-shooter; but they were put in for all that. "We shall go farthest," said they.

"What is to happen will happen," said the last, as he was shot forth out of the pea-shooter; and he flew up against the old board under the garret window, just into a crack which was filled up with moss and soft mould; and the moss closed round him; there he lay a prisoner indeed, but not forgotten by provident Nature.

"What is to happen will happen," said he.

Within, in the little garret, lived a poor woman who went out in the day to clean stoves, chop wood small, and to do other hard work of the same kind, for she was strong and industrious too. But she always remained poor; and at home in the garret lay her half-grown only daughter, who was very delicate and weak; for a whole year she had kept her bed, and it seemed as if she could neither live nor die.

"She is going to her little sister," the woman said. "I had only the two children, and it was not an easy thing to provide for both, but the good God provided for one of them by taking her home to Himself; now I should be glad to keep the other that was left me; but I suppose they are not to remain separated, and my sick girl will go to her sister in heaven."

But the sick girl remained where she was. She lay quiet and patient all day long while her mother went to earn money out-of-doors. It was spring, and early in the morning, just as the mother was about to go out to work, the sun shone mildly and pleasantly through the little window, and threw its rays across the floor; and the sick girl fixed her eyes on the lowest pane in the window.

"What may that green thing be that looks in at the window? It is moving in the wind."

And the mother stepped to the window, and half opened it. "O!" said she, "on my word, that is a little pea which has taken root here, and is putting out its little leaves. How can it have got here into the crack? That is a little garden with which you can amuse yourself."

And the sick girl's bed was moved nearer to the window, so that she could always see the growing pea; and the mother went forth to her work.

"Mother, I think I shall get well," said the sick child in the evening. "The sun shone in upon me to-day delightfully warm. The little pea is prospering famously, and I shall prosper too, and get up, and go out into the warm sunshine."

"God grant it!" said the mother, but she did not believe it would be so; but she took care to prop with a little stick the green plant which had given her daughter the pleasant thoughts of life, so that it might not be broken by the wind; she tied a piece of string to the window-sill and to the upper part of the frame, so that the pea might have something round which it could twine, when it shot up: and it did shoot up indeed — one could see how it grew every day.

"Really, here is a flower coming!" said the woman one day; and now she began to cherish the hope that her sick daughter would recover. She remembered that lately the child had spoken much more cheerfully than before, that in the last few days she had risen up in bed of her own accord, and had sat upright, looking with delighted eyes at the little garden in which only one plant grew. A week afterward the invalid for the first time sat up for a whole hour. Quite happy, she sat there in the warm sunshine; the window was opened, and outside before it stood a pink pea blossom, fully blown. The sick girl bent down and gently kissed the delicate leaves. This day was like a festival.

"The Heavenly Father Himself has planted that pea, and caused it to prosper, to be a joy to you, and to me also, my blessed child!" said the glad mother; and she smiled at the flower, as if it had been a good angel.

But about the other peas? Why, the one who flew out into the wide world and said, "Catch me if you can," fell into the gutter on the roof, and found a home in a pigeon's crop;

the two lazy ones got just as far, for they, too, were eaten up by pigeons, and thus, at any rate, they were of some real use; but the fourth, who wanted to go up into the sun, fell into the sink, and lay there in the dirty water for weeks and weeks, and swelled prodigiously.

"How beautifully fat I'm growing!" said the Pea. "I shall burst at last; and I don't think any pea can do more than that. I'm the most remarkable of all the five that were in the shell."

And the Sink said he was right.

But the young girl at the garret window stood there with gleaming eyes, with the roseate hue of health on her cheeks, and folded her thin hands over the pea blossom, and thanked Heaven for it.

"I," said the Sink, "stand up for my own pea."

CHARMING.

ALFRED the sculptor — you know him? We all know him: he won the great gold medal, and got a travelling scholarship, went to Italy, and then came back to his native land. He was young in those days, and indeed he is young yet, though he is ten years older than he was then.

After his return he visited one of the little provincial towns on the island of Seeland. The whole town knew who the stranger was, and one of the richest persons gave a party in honor of him, and all who were of any consequence, or possessed any property, were invited. It was quite an event, and all the town knew of it without its being announced by beat of drum. Apprentice boys, and children of poor people, and even some of the poor people themselves, stood in front of the house, and looked at the lighted curtain; and the watchman could fancy that *he* was giving a party, so many people were in the streets. There was quite an air of festivity about, and in the house was festivity also, for Mr. Alfred the sculptor was there.

He talked, and told anecdotes, and all listened to him with pleasure and a certain kind of awe; but none felt such respect for him as did the elderly widow of an official: she seemed, so far as Mr. Alfred was concerned, like a fresh piece of blotting paper, that absorbed all that was spoken, and asked for more. She was very appreciative and incredibly ignorant — a kind of female Caspar Hauser.

"I should like to see Rome," she said. "It must be a lovely city, with all the strangers who are continually arriving there. Now, do give us a description of Rome. How does the city look when you come in by the gate?"

"I cannot very well describe it," replied the sculptor. "A great open place, and in the midst of it an obelisk, which is a thousand years old."

"An organist!" exclaimed the lady, who had never met with the word *obelisk*.

A few of the guests could hardly keep from laughing, nor could the sculptor quite keep his countenance; but the smile that rose to his lips faded away, for he saw, close by the inquisitive dame, a pair of dark-blue eyes — they belonged to the daughter of the speaker, and any one who has such a daughter cannot be silly! The mother was like a fountain of questions, and the daughter, who listened but never spoke, might pass for the beautiful Naiad of the fountain. How charming she was! She was a study for the sculptor to contemplate, but not to converse with; and, indeed, she did not speak, or only very seldom.

"Has the Pope a large family?" asked the lady.

And the young man considerately answered, as if the question had been better put, —

"No, he does not come of a great family."

"That's not what I mean," the widow persisted. "I mean, has he a wife and children?"

"The Pope is not allowed to marry," said the gentleman.

"I don't like that," was the lady's comment.

She certainly might have put more sensible questions; but if she had not spoken in just the manner she used, would her daughter have leaned so gracefully upon her shoulder, looking straight out with the almost mournful smile upon her face?

Then Mr. Alfred spoke again, and told of the glory of color in Italy, of the purple hills, the blue Mediterranean, the azure sky of the South, whose brightness and glory was to be surpassed in the North by a maiden's deep blue eyes. And this he said with a peculiar application; but she who should have understood his meaning, looked as if she were quite unconscious of it, and that again was charming!

"Italy!" sighed a few of the guests.

"O, to travel!" sighed others.

"Charming! charming!" chorused they all.

"Yes, if I win a hundred thousand dollars in the lottery," said the head tax-collector's lady, "then we will travel. I and my daughter, and you, Mr. Alfred; you must be our guide. We'll all three travel together, and one or two good friends

more." And she nodded in such a friendly way at the company, that each one might imagine he or she was the person who was to be taken to Italy. "Yes, we will go to Italy! but not to those parts where there are robbers — we'll keep to Rome, and to the great high-roads where one is safe.

And the daughter sighed very quietly. And how much may lie in one little sigh, or be placed in it! The young man placed a great deal in it. The two blue eyes, lit up that evening in honor of him, must conceal treasures — treasures of the heart and mind — richer than all the glories of Rome; and when he left the party that night he had lost *his* heart — lost it completely, to the young lady.

The house of the head tax-collector's widow was now the one which Mr. Alfred the sculptor most assiduously frequented; and it was understood that his visits were not intended for that lady, though he and she were the people who kept up the conversation: he came for the daughter's sake. They called her Kala. Her name was really Calen Malena, and these two names had been contracted into the one name, Kala. She was beautiful; but a few said she was rather dull, and probably slept late of a morning.

"She has always been accustomed to that," her mother said. "She's a beauty, and they always are easily tired. She sleeps rather late, but that makes her eyes so clear."

What a power lay in the depths of those dark-blue eyes! "Still waters run deep." The young man felt the truth of this proverb, and his heart had sunk into the depths. He spoke and told his adventures, and the mamma was as simple and eager in her questioning as on the first evening of their meeting.

It was a pleasure to hear Alfred describe anything. He spoke of Naples, of excursions to Mount Vesuvius, and showed colored prints of several of the eruptions. And the head tax-collector's widow had never heard of them before, or taken time to consider the question.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed. "So that is a burning mountain! But is it not dangerous to the people round about?"

"Whole cities have been destroyed," he answered; "for instance, Pompeii and Herculaneum."

"But the poor people! — And you saw all that with your own eyes?"

"No, I did not see any of the eruptions represented in these pictures, but I will show you a picture of my own of an eruption I saw."

He laid a pencil sketch upon the table, and mamma, who had been absorbed in the contemplation of the highly colored prints, threw a glance at the pale drawing, and cried in astonishment, —

"Did you see it throw up white fire?"

For a moment Alfred's respect for Kala's mamma suffered a sudden diminution; but, dazzled by the light that illumined Kala, he soon found it quite natural that the old lady should have no eye for color. After all, it was of no consequence, for Kala's mamma had the best of all things, namely, Kala herself.

And Alfred and Kala were betrothed, which was natural enough, and the betrothal was announced in the little newspaper of the town. Mamma purchased thirty copies of the paper, that she might cut out the paragraph and send it to their friends and acquaintances. And the betrothed pair were happy, and the mother-in-law elect was happy too, for it seemed like connecting herself with Thorwaldsen.

"For you are a continuation of Thorwaldsen," she said to Alfred.

And it seemed to Alfred that mamma had in this instance said a clever thing. Kala said nothing; but her eyes shone, her lips smiled, her every movement was graceful: yes, she was beautiful; that cannot be too often repeated.

Alfred undertook to take a bust of Kala and of his mother-in-law. They sat to him accordingly, and saw how he moulded and smoothed the soft clay with his fingers.

"I suppose it is only on our account," said mamma-in-law, "that you undertake this commonplace work, and don't leave your servant to do all that sticking together."

"It is necessary that I should mould the clay myself," he replied.

"Ah, yes, you are so very polite," retorted mamma; and Kala silently pressed his hand, still soiled by the clay.

And he unfolded to both of them the loveliness of nature in creation, pointing out how the living stood higher in the scale than the dead creature, how the plant was developed beyond the mineral, the animal beyond the plant, and man beyond the animal. He strove to show them how mind and beauty become manifest in outward form, and how it was the sculptor's task to seize that beauty and to manifest it in his works.

Kala stood silent, and nodded approbation of the expressed thought, while mamma-in-law made the following confession:

"It is difficult to follow all that. But I manage to hobble after you with my thoughts, though they whirl round and round, but I contrive to hold them fast."

And Kala's beauty held Alfred fast, filled his whole soul, and seized and mastered him. Beauty gleamed forth from Kala's every feature — gleamed from her eyes, lurked in the corners of her mouth, and in every movement of her fingers. Alfred the sculptor saw this: he spoke only of her, thought only of her, and the two became one; and thus it may be said that she spoke much, for he and she were one, and he was always talking of her.

Such was the betrothal; and now came the wedding, with bridesmaids and wedding presents, all duly mentioned in the wedding speech.

Mamma-in-law had set up Thorwaldsen's bust at the end of the table, attired in a dressing-gown, for he was to be a guest; such was her whim. Songs were sung and cheers were given, for it was a gay wedding, and they were a handsome pair. "Pygmalion received his Galatea," so one of the songs said.

"Ah, that's your mythologics," said mamma-in-law.

Next day the youthful pair started for Copenhagen, where they were to live. Mamma-in-law accompanied them, "to take care of the commonplace," as she said — meaning the domestic economy. Kala was like a doll in a doll's house, all was so bright, so new, and so fine. There they sat, all three; and as for Alfred, to use a proverb that will describe his position, we may say that he sat like the friar in the goose-yard.

The magic of form had enchanted him. He had looked at

the case, and cared not to inquire what the case contained, and that omission brings unhappiness, much unhappiness into married life; for the case may be broken and the gilt may come off, and then the purchaser may repent his bargain. In a large party it is very disagreeable to observe that one's buttons are giving way, and that there are no buckles to fall back upon; but it is worse still in a great company to become aware that wife and mother-in-law are talking nonsense, and that one cannot depend upon one's self for a happy piece of wit to carry off the stupidity of the thing.

The young married pair often sat hand in hand, he speaking and she letting fall a word here and there — the same melody, the same clear, bell-like sounds. It was a mental relief when Sophy, one of her friends, came to pay a visit.

Sophy was not pretty. She was certainly free from bodily deformity, though Kala always asserted she was a little crooked; but no eye save a friend's would have remarked it. She was a very sensible girl, and it never occurred to her that she might become at all dangerous here. Her appearance was like a pleasant breath of air in the doll's house; and air was certainly required there, as they all acknowledged. They felt they wanted airing, and consequently they came out into the air, and mamma-in-law and the young couple travelled to Italy.

"Thank Heaven that we are in our own four walls again!" was the exclamation of mother and daughter when they came home a year after.

"There's no pleasure in travelling," said mamma-in-law. "To tell the truth, it's very wearisome — I beg pardon for saying so. I found the time hang heavy, although I had my children with me; and it's expensive work, travelling, — very expensive! And all those galleries one has to see, and the quantity of things you are obliged to run after! You must do it for decency's sake, for you're sure to be asked when you come back; and then you're sure to be told that you've omitted to see what was best worth seeing. I got tired at last of those endless Madonnas: one seemed to be turning a Madonna one's self!"

"And what bad living you get!" said Kala.

"Yes," replied mamma, "no such thing as an honest meat soup. It's miserable trash, their cookery."

And the travelling fatigued Kala: she was always fatigued, that was the worst of it. Sophy was taken into the house, where her presence was a real advantage.

Mamma-in-law acknowledged that Sophy understood both housewifery and art, though a knowledge of the latter could not be expected from a person of her limited means; and she was, moreover, an honest, faithful girl: she showed that thoroughly while Kala lay sick — fading away.

Where the case is everything, the case should be strong, or else all is over. And all *was* over with the case — Kala died.

"She was beautiful," said mamma; "she was quite different from the antiques, for they are so damaged. A beauty ought to be perfect, and Kala was a perfect beauty."

Alfred wept, and mamma wept, and both of them wore mourning. The black dress suited mamma very well, and she wore mourning the longest. Moreover, she had soon to experience another grief in seeing Alfred marry again — marry Sophy, who had no appearance at all.

"He's gone to the very extreme," cried mamma-in-law; "he has gone from the most beautiful to the ugliest, and has forgotten his first wife. Men have no endurance. My husband was of a different stamp, and he died before me."

"Pygmalion received his Galatea," said Alfred: "yes, that's what they said in the wedding song. I had once really fallen in love with the beautiful statue, which awoke to life in my arms; but the kindred soul which Heaven sends down to us, the angel who can feel and sympathize with and elevate us, I have not found and won till now. You came, Sophy, not in the glory of outward beauty, though you are fair — fairer than is needful. The chief thing remains the chief. You came to teach the sculptor that his work is but clay and dust, only an outward form in a fabric that passes away, and that we must seek the essence, the internal spirit. Poor Kala! ours was but wayfarers' life. Yonder, where we shall know each other by sympathy, we shall be half strangers."

"That was not lovingly spoken," said Sophy — "not spoken

like a true Christian. Yonder, where there is no giving in marriage, but where, as you say, souls attract each other by sympathy; there where everything beautiful develops itself and is elevated, her soul may acquire such completeness that it may sound more harmoniously than mine; and you will then once more utter the first rapturous exclamation of your love, 'Beautiful — most beautiful!'"

PEITER, PETER, AND PEER.

WHAT children know nowadays is past belief: it is hard to say what they do not know. That the stork came and fetched them out of the well or the mill-dam, when they were tiny little things, and brought them to father and mother, is such an old story now that they no longer believe it, and yet it is the real truth.

But how comes it that the little ones are down in the mill-dam or the well? Ah! not every one knows that, but there are some few who do know it. Have you ever looked well at the sky, on a clear, starlight night, and watched the many shooting-stars? It is as if they were stars that fell from the sky and disappeared in the darkness. Even the most learned cannot explain what they do not know themselves; nevertheless, when one knows it, one can explain it. It is like a little candle from a Christmas-tree, that drops from the deep blue sky, and is blown out by the evening wind. It is a soul spark from our Lord, that flies down toward the earth, and when it comes into our thick, heavy air, loses its brilliancy, and there only remains of it something that our eyes cannot see, — for it is something much finer and more delicate than our air, — a little child from heaven; a little angel, but without wings, for it has to become a human child, and then what would it do with wings, if it had them?

Softly it glides through the air, and the wind wafts it into a flower, — a dandelion maybe, or a rose, or cowslip, — and there it lies and waits. It is so light and airy that a fly could carry it off, and a bee could do that very easily; but when these come to hunt for their sweetness in the flower, and find the little air-child lying there in the way, they do not whisk it out. O no! they would never do that; they take it and carry it to a water-lily leaf, where they lay it down in the warm sunshine, and from the leaf the air-child creeps and scrambles

into the water, where it remains, sleeping and growing till it is big enough for the stork to see it; and then he picks it up and carries it to some kind family where they very much wish for such a sweet little one. But how sweet or not it becomes, that depends on whether the little one has drunk pure, clear water, or whether it has swallowed mud and duck-weed the wrong way: that makes one so earthy!

The stork never chooses, but takes the first one he happens to see. One comes into a pleasant house to kind and loving parents; another comes to poor people in great sorrow and misery: it would have been much better to remain in the mill-dam!

The little ones never can remember afterward what they dreamed while they lay in the water, under the water-lily leaf, where, when evening came, they heard the frogs sing "Coax, coax, gwax;" and that means, in human language, "Make haste to go to sleep and dream." Nor can they remember in what flower they lay at first, nor how it smelt; and yet there is always something within them, when they are grown men and women, which makes them feel, "This flower I like best;" that is because it is the one they were laid in by the wind, when they were air-children.

The stork lives to a good old age, and always takes an interest in the little ones whom he has brought out into the world, and takes note of how they get on, and if they behave well. To be sure, he cannot do much for them, or in any way change anything in their lives, for he has his own large family to attend to, but at least he never lets them quite out of his thoughts.

I know an old and very worthy, honest Stork, who has had much experience, and has fetched many little ones out of the water, and knows their histories — in which there always is to be found a little mud and duck-weed from the mill-dam. I begged him to tell me the history of one of them and he said I should have three instead of one, out of the Peitersens' house.

That was a remarkably nice family, the Peitersens; the father was a member of the common council, and that was a great distinction. To this home the stork brought a little fel-

low who was called Peiter ; and the year after he brought another, and him they called Peter ; and when the third one came he got the name of Peer ; because the names of Peiter, Peter, Peer, are all contained in that of Peitersen. Here then were three brothers, — three shooting-stars, — each rocked in a flower, then laid under the water-lily leaf in the mill-dam, and fetched from there by the Stork and brought to the Peitersen family, who live in the corner house that you have so often seen.

They grew in body and in mind, and wanted to be something more than common councilmen. Peiter said he wanted to be a robber ; he had seen the play of "Fra Diavolo," and after that decided upon the robber business, as the most delightful in the world.

Peter said he would be a soap-fat man, and carry a rattle that makes a dreadful noise, — such a one as he had heard that soap-fat men in other countries have ; and Peer, who was such a good, sweet boy, round and plump, but who used to bite his nails, — that was his only fault, — Peer wanted to be "Papa." And this was what each said he wanted to be in the world, when people asked them about it.

And then they were sent to school, and the one was first and the other last of his class, and one came just in between ; but for all that they might be just as good and as clever, the one as the other, — and so they were, — at least so said their fond and very clear-sighted parents.

They went to children's parties, and they smoked cigars when nobody was looking, and they made great progress in knowledge and insight.

Pieter, from the time he was quite small, was quarrelsome and fierce, just as a robber ought to be ; he was a very naughty boy, but that came, his mother said, from worms, — naughty children always have something the matter with them, — that is mud in the stomach, — from the mill-dam. But one day his mother's new silk gown was the worse for his obstinacy and naughtiness.

"Don't push the tea-table, my sweet lamb," said his mother. "You might upset the cream-pitcher, and then I should get spots on my silk gown ;" and the "sweet lamb," with a firm

hand, took the cream-pitcher, and with a firm hand poured all the cream into mamma's lap, — and mamma could not help saying "O lamb, lamb, that was careless of you, lamb!" But he had a will of his own, — that she could not deny, — and a strong will shows character, and that is so pleasant for a mother to see.

He might undoubtedly have become a robber, but he didn't after all; he only came to look like one — wore a slouched hat, bare throat, and long, lank hair; he was to have been an artist, but only got as far as the clothes, and looked like a hollyhock, and all the people he drew looked like hollyhocks, — they were so lanky. He was very fond of that flower, and the stork said he had lain in it when he was an air-child.

Peter must have lain in a buttercup: he looked so buttery around the corners of his mouth, and had such a yellow skin, that one could not but fancy that if he were cut in the skin, butter would come out. He ought to have been a butter-dealer, and might have been his own sign; but the inner man, in him, was a soap-fat man with a rattle. He was the musical member of the Peitersen family — "musical enough for all of them," said the neighbors. He composed seventeen new polkas in one week, and then put them all together and made an opera of them, with accompaniment of drum and rattle. Ugh! how fine that was!

Peer was small, red, and white, and quite ordinary; he had lain in a daisy. He never defended himself when the other boys tried to fight him: he said he was the most reasonable, and the most reasonable always gives way.

He made collections; first of slate pencils, and after that of the seals of letters; and then he got a little cabinet of Natural History curiosities, in which was the skeleton of a stickleback, three blind young rats in alcohol, and a stuffed mole. Peer had great taste for science and an eye for the beauties of nature — and that was very satisfactory for his parents, and for Peer too.

His brothers were both engaged to be married, while he still thought of nothing but completing his collection of water-fowl's eggs. He knew a great deal more about animals than about human beings; he even thought that we never could be

as great as the animals in the feeling which we consider as the highest of all, and that is — love. He saw that when Mrs. Nightingale was on her nest, setting, Mr. Nightingale sat on a branch close by and sang all night to his little wife, "Kluck-kluck-zi-zi-lo-lo-li!" Peer felt that he never could do that, and that it would be impossible for him to sacrifice his night's rest in that way. When Madame Stork had the baby-storks in the nest, Mr. Stork stood all night on one leg on the edge of the roof, to watch. Peer could not have stood so for an hour!

And when one day he closely inspected a spider's web, and saw what it contained, he utterly renounced all ideas of marriage. Mr. Spider weaves his web that he may catch thoughtless flies, no matter if old or young, fat or lean; he only lives for the support of his family. But Mrs. Spider lives only for him. She eats him up out of sheer love; she eats his heart, his head, his stomach, and nothing but his long, thin legs remain in the web, in the place where he sat with his heart full of anxiety for the welfare of his family. And this is the real, pure truth — right straight out of the Natural History book. Peer saw all this and grew thoughtful: to be so dearly loved by one's wife, that she eats one up out of love! No, that is too much — no human being could do as much as that, and would it be desirable?

And then Peer resolved never to marry, never to give nor to take a kiss; that might look like the first step toward marriage. But he got a kiss, notwithstanding — the same that we must all get some day — the great kiss that Death gives. When we have lived long enough, then Death is ordered to "kiss him away," and away we go; there comes a ray of sunshine, straight from our Lord, so bright and dazzling as almost to blind us, and then the soul which came from heaven as a shooting-star, goes back like a shooting-star, but not to sleep in a flower, or to dream under the leaf of the water-lily. O, no! it has much more important things to do; it goes into the great land of eternity and there it stays, but what that land is like, no one can say and no one knows. No one has peeped into it, not even the Stork, although he knows and has seen more than almost any one else. But he knew nothing

more of Peer after he had gone to that strange land than what I have told you, though about Peiter and Peter he said he could tell much more ; but I thought I had heard enough of them, and I suppose you have too, and so I thanked him and bade him good-by for this once. But now he wants payment for this commonplace little story — three frogs and a little snake — he takes his pay in creature-comforts, you see. Will you pay him? I will not: I have neither frogs nor snakes.

THE ICE MAIDEN.

LITTLE RUDY.

LET us pay a visit to Switzerland. Let us look around us in that magnificent mountainous country, where the woods creep up the sides of the precipitous walls of rock; let us ascend to the dazzling snow-fields above, and descend again to the green valleys beneath, where the rivers and the brooks foam along as if they were afraid that they should not fast enough reach the ocean and be lost in its immensity. The sun's burning rays shine on the deep dales, and they also shine upon the heavy masses of snow above, so that the ice-blocks which have been accumulating for years melt and become rolling avalanches, piled-up glaciers. Two such lie in the broad mountain clefts under Schreckhorn and Wetterhorn, near the little mountain town of Grindelwald. They are wonderful to behold, and therefore in summer-time many strangers come here from every foreign land. They come over the lofty snow-covered hills; they come through the deep valleys, and from thence for hours and hours they must mount; and always, as they ascend, the valleys seem to become deeper and deeper, until they appear as if viewed from a balloon high up in the air. The clouds often hang like thick heavy curtains of smoke around the lofty mountain peaks, while down in the valley, where the many brown wooden houses lie scattered about, a bright ray of the sun may be shining, and bringing into strong relief some brilliant patch of green, making it look as if it were transparent. The waters foam and roar as they rush along below — they murmur and tinkle above. They look, up there, like silver ribbons streaming down over the rocks.

On both sides of the ascending road lie wooden houses. Each house has its little potato garden, and this is a neces-

sity; for within doors yonder are many mouths — the houses are crammed with children — and children often waste their food. From all the cottages they sally forth in swarms, and throng round travellers, whether these are on foot or in carriages. The whole troop of children are little merchants — they offer for sale charming toy wooden houses, models of the dwellings one sees here among the mountains. Whether it be fair weather or foul, the crowds of children issue forth with their wares.

Some twenty years ago occasionally stood here, but always at a short distance from the other children, a little boy who was also ready to engage in trade. He stood with an earnest, grave expression of countenance, and holding his deal box fast with both his hands, as if he were afraid of losing it. The very earnestness of his face, and his being such a little fellow, caused him to be remarked and called forward, so that he often sold the most — he did not himself know why. Higher up among the hills lived his maternal grandfather, who cut out the neat, pretty houses, and in a room up yonder was an old press full of all sorts of things — nut-crackers, knives, forks, boxes with prettily carved leaf-work, and springing chamois: there was everything to please a child's eye. But the little Rudy, as he was called, looked with greater interest and longing at the old fire-arms and other weapons which were hung up under the beams of the roof. "He should have them some day," said his Grandfather, "when he was big enough and strong enough to make use of them." Young as the boy was, he was set to take care of the goats; and he who had to clamber after them was obliged to keep a good lookout and to be a good climber. And Rudy *was* an excellent climber; he even went higher than the goats, for he was fond of seeking for birds'-nests up among the tops of the trees. Bold and adventurous he was, but no one ever saw him smile, except when he stood near the roaring cataract or heard the thunder of a rolling avalanche. He never played with the other children — he never went near them, except when his grandfather sent him down to sell the things he made. And Rudy did not care much for that; he preferred scrambling about among the mountains, or sitting at home with his grand-

father, and hearing him tell stories of olden days, and of the people near by at Meyringen, from whence he came. "This tribe had not been settled there from the earliest ages of the world," he said; "they were wanderers from afar; they had come from the distant North, where their race still dwelt, and were called 'Swedes.'" This was a great deal for Rudy to learn, but he learned more from other sources, and these were the animals domiciled in the house. One was a large dog, Ajola, a legacy from Rudy's father — the other a tom-cat. Rudy had much for which to thank the latter — he had taught him to climb.

"Come out upon the roof with me!" the Cat had said, distinctly and intelligibly; for when one is a young child, and can scarcely speak, fowls and ducks, cats and dogs, are almost as easily understood as the language that fathers and mothers use. One must be very little indeed then, however; it is the time when grandpapa's stick neighs, and becomes a horse with head, legs, and tail.

Some children retain these infantine thoughts longer than others; and of these it is said that they are very backward, exceedingly stupid children — people say so much!

"Come out upon the roof with me, little Rudy!" was one of the first things the Cat said, and Rudy understood him.

"It is all nonsense to fancy one must fall down; you won't fall unless you are afraid. Come! set one of your paws here, the other there, and take care of yourself with the rest of your paws! Keep a sharp lookout, and be active in your limbs! If there be a hole, spring over it, and keep a firm footing as I do."

And so also did little Rudy; often and often he sat on the shelving roof of the house with the cat, often too on the tops of the trees; but he sat also higher up among the towering rocks, which the cat did not frequent.

"Higher! higher!" said the trees and the bushes. "Do you not see how we climb up — to what height we go, and how fast we hold on, even among the narrowest points of rock?"

And Rudy gained the top of the hill earlier than the sun had gained it; and there he took his morning draught, the

fresh invigorating mountain air — that drink which only Our Lord can prepare, and which mankind pronounces to be the early fragrance from the mountain herbs and the wild thyme and mint in the valley. All that is heavy the overhanging clouds absorb within themselves, and the winds carry them over the pine woods, while the spirit of fragrance becomes air — light and fresh ; and this was Rudy's morning draught.

The sunbeams — those daughters of the sun, who bring blessings with them — kissed his cheeks ; and Dizziness stood near on the watch, but dared not approach him ; and the swallows from his grandfather's house beneath (there were not less than seven nests) flew up to him and the goats, singing, " We and you, and you and we ! " They brought him greetings from his home, even from the two hens, the only birds in the establishment, though Rudy was not intimate with them.

Young as he was, he had travelled, and travelled a good deal for such a little fellow. He was born in the Canton of Valais, and brought from thence over the hills. He had visited on foot Staubbach, that seems like a silver veil to flutter before the snow-clad, glittering white mountain Jungfrau. And he had been at the great glaciers near Grindelwald, but that was connected with a sad event ; his mother had found her death there, and there, his Grandfather used to say, " little Rudy had got all his childish merriment knocked out of him." Before the child was a year old, " he laughed more than he cried," his mother had written ; but from the time that he fell into the crevasse in the ice, his disposition had entirely changed. The grandfather did not say much about this in general, but the whole hill knew the fact.

Rudy's father had been a postilion, and the large dog who now shared Rudy's home had always accompanied him in his journeys over the Simplon down to the Lake of Geneva. Rudy's kindred on his father's side lived in the valley of the Rhone, in the Canton Valais ; his uncle was a celebrated chamois hunter, and a well-known Alpine guide. Rudy was not more than a year old when he lost his father ; and his mother was anxious to return with her child to her own family in the Bernese Oberland. Her father dwelt at the distance of a few

hours' journey from Grindelwald; he was a carver in wood, and he made so much by this that he was very well off.

Carrying her infant in her arms, she set out homeward in the month of June, in company with two chamois-hunters, over the Gemmi to reach Grindelwald. They had accomplished the greater portion of the journey, had crossed the highest ridges to the snow-fields, and could already see her native valley with all its well-known scattered brown cottages; they had now only the labor of going over the upper part of one great glacier. The snow had recently fallen, and concealed a crevasse — not one so deep as to reach to the abyss below where the water foamed along, but deeper far than the height of any human being. The young woman who was carrying her infant slipped, sank in, and suddenly disappeared; not a shriek, not a groan was heard — nothing but the crying of a little child. Upwards of an hour elapsed before her two companions were able to obtain from the nearest house ropes and poles to assist them in extricating her; and it was with much difficulty and labor that they brought up from the crevasse two dead bodies, as they thought. Every means of restoring animation was employed, and they were successful in recalling the child to life, but not the mother; and so the old grandfather received into his house, not a daughter, but a daughter's son — the little one "who laughed more than he cried." But a change seemed to have come over him since he had been in the glacier-spalten — in the cold underground ice-world, where the souls of the condemned are imprisoned until Doomsday, as the Swiss peasants assert.

Not unlike a rushing stream, frozen and pressed into blocks of green crystal, lies the glacier, one great mass of ice balanced upon another; in the depths beneath tears along the accumulating stream of melted ice and snow; deep hollows, immense crevasses, yawn within it. A wondrous palace of crystal it is, and in it dwells the Ice Maiden — the queen of the glaciers. She, the slayer, the crusher, is half the mighty ruler of the rivers, half a child of the air: therefore she is able to soar to the highest haunts of the chamois, to the loftiest peaks of the snow-covered hills, where the boldest mountaineer has to cut footsteps for himself in the ice; she sails

on the slightest sprig of the pine-tree over the raging torrents below, and bounds lightly from one mass of ice to another, with her long snow-white hair fluttering about her, and her bluish-green robe shining like the water in the deep Swiss lakes.

"To crush — to hold fast — such power is mine!" she cries; "yet a beautiful boy was snatched from me — a boy whom I had kissed, but not kissed to death. He is again among mankind; he tends the goats upon the mountain heights; he is always climbing higher and higher still, away, away from other human beings, but not from me! He is mine — I wait for him!"

And she commanded Vertigo to undertake the mission. It was in summer-time; the Ice Maiden was melting in the green valley where the green mint grew, and Vertigo mounted and dived. Vertigo has several sisters, quite a flock of them, and the Ice Maiden selected the strongest among the many who exercise their power within doors and without — those who sit on the banisters of steep staircases and the outer rails of lofty towers, who bound like squirrels along the mountain ridges, and, springing thence, tread the air as the swimmer treads the water, and lure their victims onward, down to the abyss beneath.

Vertigo and the Ice Maiden both grasp after mankind, as the polypus grasps after all that comes within its reach. Vertigo was to seize Rudy.

"Seize him, indeed!" cried Vertigo; "I cannot do it! That good-for-nothing cat has taught him its art. Yon child of the human race possesses a power within himself which keeps me at a distance. I cannot reach the little urchin when he hangs from the branches out over the depths below, or I would willingly loosen his hold, and send him whirling down through the air. But I cannot."

"We must seize him, though!" said the Ice Maiden, "either you or I! I will — I will!"

"No — no!" broke upon the air, like a mountain echo of the church-bells' peal; but it was a whisper, it was a song, it was the liquid tones of a chorus from other spirits of Nature — mild, soft, and loving, the daughters of the rays of the sun. They station themselves every evening in a

circle upon the mountain peaks, and spread out their rose-tinted wings, which, as the sun sinks, become redder and red der, until the lofty Alps seem all in a blaze. Men call this the Alpine glow. When the sun has sunk, they retire within the white snow on the crests of the hills, and sleep there until sunrise, when they come forth again. Much do they love flowers, butterflies, and mankind ; and among the latter they had taken a great fancy for little Rudy.

"You shall not imprison him — you shall not get him!" they sang.

"Greater and stronger have I seized and imprisoned," said the Ice Maiden.

Then sang the daughters of the sun of the wanderer whose hat the whirlwind tore from his head, and carried away in its stormy flight. The wind could take his cap, but not the man himself — no, it could make him tremble with its violence, but it could not sweep him away. "The human race is stronger and more ethereal even than we are ; they alone may mount higher than even the sun, our parent. They know the magic words that can rule the wind and the waves so that they are compelled to obey and to serve them. You loosen the heavy oppressive weight, and they soar upward."

Thus sang the sweet tones of the bell-like chorus.

And every morning the sun's rays shone through the one little window in the grandfather's house upon the quiet child. The daughters of the rays of the sun kissed him — they wished to thaw, to obliterate the ice-kiss that the queenly maiden of the glaciers had given him when, in his dead mother's lap, he lay in the deep crevasse of ice from which almost as by a miracle he had been rescued.

THE JOURNEY TO THE NEW HOME.

Rudy was now eight years of age. His father's brother, who lived in the valley of the Rhone, on teh other side of the mountain, wished to have the boy, as he could be better educated and taught to do for himself there ; so also thought the grandfather, and he therefore agreed to part with him.

The time for Rudy's departure drew nigh. There were many more to take leave of than only his grandfather. First there was Ajola, the old dog.

"Your father was the postilion, and I was the postilion's dog," said Ajola. "We have often journeyed up and down, and I know both dogs and men on both sides of the mountains. It has not been my habit to speak much, but now that we shall have so short a time for conversation, I will say a little more than usual, and will relate to you something upon which I have ruminated a great deal. I cannot understand it, nor can you; but that is of no consequence. But I have gathered this from it — that the good things of this world are not dealt out equally either to dogs or to mankind; all are not born to lie in laps or to drink milk. I have never been accustomed to such indulgences. But I have seen a whelp of a little dog travelling in the inside of a post-chaise, occupying a man's or a woman's seat, and the lady to whom he belonged, or whom he governed, carried a bottle of milk, from which she helped him; she also offered him sponge-cakes, but he would not condescend to eat them; he only sniffed at them, so she ate them herself. I was running in the sun by the side of the carriage, as hungry as a dog could be, but *I* had only to chew the cud of bitter reflection. Things were not so justly meted out as they might have been — but when are they? May you come to drive in carriages, and lie in Fortune's lap; but you can't bring all this about yourself. *I* never could, either by barking or growling."

This was Ajola's discourse; and Rudy threw his arms round his neck and kissed him on his wet mouth; and then he caught up the Cat in his arms, but the animal was angry at this, and exclaimed, "You are getting too strong for me, but I will not use my claws against you. Scramble away over the mountains — I have taught you how to do so; never think of falling, but hold fast, have no fear, and you will be safe enough."

And the Cat sprang down and ran off, for he did not wish Rudy to see how sorry he was.

The hens hopped upon the floor; one of them had lost her tail, for a traveller, who chose to play the sportsman, had shot off her tail, mistaking the poor fowl for a bird of prey.

"Rudy is going over the hills," murmured one of the hens.

"He is in a hurry," said the other, "and I don't like leave-takings;" and they both hopped out.

The goats also bleated their farewells, and very sorry they were.

Just at that time there were two active guides about to cross the mountains; they proposed descending the other side of the Gemmi, and Rudy was to accompany them on foot. It was a long and laborious journey for such a little fellow, but he had a good deal of strength, and had courage that was indomitable.

The swallows flew a little way with him, and sang to him, "We and you, and you and we!"

The travellers' path led across the rushing Lütschine, which in numerous small streams falls from the dark clefts of the Grindelwald glaciers. The trunks of fallen trees and fragments of rock serve here as bridges. They had soon passed the thicket of alders, and commenced to ascend the mountain, close to where the glaciers had loosened themselves from the side of the hill; and they went upon the glacier over the blocks of ice, and round them.

Rudy crept here, and walked there; his eyes sparkling with joy, as he firmly placed his iron-tipped mountain shoe wherever he could find footing for it. The small patches of black earth, which the mountain torrents had cast upon the glacier, imparted to it a burned appearance, but still the bluish-green, glass-like ice shone out visibly. They had to go round the little pools which were dammed up, as it were, amidst detached masses of ice; and in this circuitous route they approached an immense stone, which lay rocking on the edge of a crevasse in the ice. The stone lost its equipoise, toppled over, and rolled down; and the echo of its thundering fall resounded faintly from the glacier's deep abyss, far — far beneath.

Upward, always upward, they journeyed on; the glacier itself stretched upward, like a continued stream of masses of ice piled up in wild confusion, amidst bare and rugged rocks. Rudy remembered for a moment what had been told him — that he, with his mother, had lain buried in one of these cold, mysterious fissures; but he soon threw off such gloomy thoughts, and only looked upon the tale as one among the many fables he had heard. Once or twice, when the men with

whom he was travelling thought that it was rather difficult for so little a boy to mount up, they held out their hands to help him; but he never needed any assistance, and he stood upon the glacier as securely as if he had been a chamois itself.

Now they came upon rocky ground, sometimes amidst mossy stones, sometimes amidst low pine-trees, and again out upon the green pastures — always changing, always new. Around them towered lofty snow-clad mountains, those of which every child in the neighborhood knows the names — Jungfrau, the Monk, and Eiger.

Rudy had never before been so far from his home — never before beheld the wide-spreading ocean of snow that lay with its immovable billows of ice, from which the wind occasionally swept little clouds of powdery snow, as it sweeps the scum from the waves of the sea. Glacier stretched close to glacier — one might have said they were hand in hand; and each is a crystal palace belonging to the Ice Maiden, whose pleasure and occupation it is to seize and imprison her victims.

The sun was shining warmly, and the snow dazzled the eyes as if it had been strewn with flashing pale-blue diamond sparks. Innumerable insects, especially butterflies and bees, lay dead in masses on the snow; they had winged their way too high, or else the wind had carried them upward to the regions, for them, of cold and death. Around Wetterhorn hung what might be likened to a large tuft of very fine dark wool, a threatening cloud; it sank, bulging out with what it had concealed in itself — a föhn,[1] fearfully violent in its might when it should break loose.

The whole of this journey — the night quarters above — the wild track — the mountain clefts where the water, during an incalculably long period of time, had penetrated through the blocks of stone — made an indelible impression upon little Rudy's mind.

A forsaken stone building, beyond the sea of snow, gave the travellers shelter for the night. Here they found some charcoal and branches of pine-trees. A fire was soon kindled, couches of some kind were arranged as well as they could be,

[1] Föhn, a humid south wind on the Swiss mountains and lakes, the forerunner of a storm. — *Translator.*

and the men placed themselves near the blazing fire, took out their tobacco, and began to drink the warm spiced beverage they had prepared for themselves, nor did they forget to give some to Rudy.

The conversation fell upon the mysterious beings who haunt the Alpine land: upon the strange gigantic snakes in the deep lakes — the night-folks — the spectre host, that carry sleepers off through the air to the wonderful, almost floating city of Venice — the wild herdsman, who drives his black sheep over the green pastures; if these had not been seen, the sound of their bells had undoubtedly been heard, and the frightful noise made by the phantom herds.

Rudy listened with intense curiosity to these superstitious tales, but without any fear, for *that* he did not know; and while he listened, he fancied that he heard the uproar of the wild spectral herd. Yes! It became more and more distinct; the men heard it too. They were awed into silence; and as they hearkened to the unearthly noise, they whispered to Rudy that he must not sleep.

It was a föhn that had burst forth — that violent tempestuous wind which issues downward from the mountains into the valley beneath, and in its fury snaps large trees as if they were but reeds, and carries the wooden houses from one bank of a river to the other as we would move men on a chess-board.

After an hour had elapsed, Rudy was told that it was all over, and he might now go to sleep safely; and, weary with his long walk, he did sleep, as if in duty bound to do so.

At a very early hour in the morning, the party set off again. The sun that day lighted up for Rudy new mountains, new glaciers, and new snow-fields. They had entered the Canton Valais, and were upon the other side of the ridge of hills seen from Grindelwald, yet still far from his new home.

Other mountain clefts, other pastures, other woods, and other hilly paths unfolded themselves; other houses, and other people too, Rudy saw. But what kind of human beings were these? The outcasts of fate they were, with frightful, disgusting, yellowish faces, and necks of which the hideous flesh hung down like bags. They were the cretins — poor diseased wretches, dragging themselves along, and looking

with stupid lustreless eyes upon the strangers who crossed their path — the women even more disgusting than the men. Were such the persons who surrounded his new home?

THE UNCLE.

In his uncle's house, when Rudy arrived there, he saw, and he thanked God for it, people such as he had been accustomed to see. There was only one cretin there, a poor idiotic lad, — one of those unfortunate beings who, in their poverty — in fact, in their utter destitution — go by turns to different families and remain a month or two in each house. Poor Saperli happened to be in his uncle's house when Rudy arrived.

The uncle was a bold and experienced hunter, and was also a cooper by trade; his wife a lively little woman, with a face something like that of a bird, eyes like those of an eagle, and a long skinny throat.

Everything was new to Rudy — the dress, customs, employments — even the language itself; but his childish ear would soon learn to understand that. The contrast between his home at his grandfather's and his uncle's abode was very favorable to the latter. The house was larger; the walls were adorned by horns of the chamois and brightly-polished guns; a painting of the Virgin Mary hung over the door, and fresh Alpine roses, and a lamp that was kept always burning, were placed before it.

His uncle, as has been told, was one of the most renowned chamois hunters of the district, and was also one of the best and most experienced of the guides.

Rudy became the pet of the house; but there was another pet as well — a blind, lazy old hound, who could no longer be of any use; but he *had been* useful, and the worth of the animal in his earlier days was remembered, and he therefore now lived as one of the family, and had every comfort. Rudy patted the dog, but the animal did not like strangers, and as yet Rudy was a stranger; but he soon won every heart, and became as one of themselves.

"Things don't go so badly in Canton Valais," said his Uncle. "We have plenty of chamois; they do not die off so fast as the wild he-goats; matters are much better nowadays

than in old times, although they *are* so bepraised. A hole is burst in the bag, and we have a current of air now in our confined valley. Something better always starts up when antiquated things are done away with."

The uncle became quite chatty, and discoursed to the boy of the events of his own boyhood and those of his father. Valais was then, as he called it, only a receptacle for sick people — miserable cretins; "but the French soldiers came, and they made capital doctors; they soon killed the disease, and the patients with it. They know how to strike — aye, how to strike in many ways — and the girls could smite too!" and thereupon the uncle nodded to his wife, who was of French descent, and laughed. "The French could split solid stones if they chose. It was they who cut out of the rocks the road over the Simplon — yes, cut such a road that I could say to a child of three years of age, Go down to Italy! You have but to keep to the high-road, and you find yourself there." The good man then sang a French *chanson*, and wound up by shouting "hurra!" for Napoleon Bonaparte.

It was the first time that Rudy had ever heard of France, and he was interested in hearing of it, especially Lyons, that great city on the river Rhone, where his uncle had been.

The uncle prophesied that Rudy would become, in a few years, a smart chamois hunter, as he had quite a talent for it. He taught the boy to hold, load, and fire a gun; he took him up with him, in the hunting season, among the hills, and made him drink of the warm chamois' blood to ward off giddiness from the hunter; he taught him to know the time when, upon the different sides of the mountains, avalanches were about to fall, at mid-day or in the evening, whenever the sun's rays took effect; he taught him to notice the movements of the chamois, and learn their spring, so that he might alight on his feet and stand firmly; and told him that if on the fissures of the rock there was no footing, he must support himself by his elbows, and exert the muscles of his thighs and the calves of his legs to hold on fast. Even the neck could be made of use, if necessary.

The chamois are cunning, and place outposts on the watch; but the hunter must be more cunning, and scent them out.

Sometimes he might cheat them by hanging up his hat and coat on an Alpine staff, and the chamois would mistake the coat for the man. This trick the uncle played one day when he was out hunting with Rudy.

The mountain pass was narrow; indeed, there was scarcely a path at all, scarcely more than a slight cornice close to the yawning abyss. The snow that lay there was partially thawed, and the stones crumbled away whenever they were trod on. So the uncle laid himself down his full length, and crept forward. Every fragment of stone that broke off, fell, rolling and knocking from one side of the rocky wall to another, until it sank to rest in the dark depths below. About a hundred paces behind his uncle stood Rudy, upon the verge of the last point of solid rock, and as he stood, he saw careering through the air, and hovering just over his uncle, an immense lämmergeier, which, with the tremendous stroke of its wing, would speedily cast the creeping worm into the abyss beneath, there to prey upon his carcase.

The uncle had eyes for nothing but the chamois, which, with its young kid, had appeared on the other side of the crevasse. Rudy was watching the bird; well did he know what was its aim, and therefore he kept his hand on the gun to fire the moment it might be necessary. Just then the chamois made a bound upward; Rudy's uncle fired, and the animal was hit by the deadly bullet, but the kid escaped as cleverly as if it had had a long life's experience in danger and flight. The enormous bird, frightened by the loud report, wheeled off in another direction; and the uncle was freed from a danger of which he was quite unconscious until he was told of it by Rudy.

As in high good-humor they were wending their way homeward, and the uncle was humming an air he remembered from his childish days, they suddenly heard a peculiar noise, which seemed to come from no great distance. They looked round on both sides — they looked upward; and there, in the heights above, on the sloping verge of the mountain, the heavy covering of snow was lifted up, and it heaved as a sheet of linen stretched out heaves when the wind creeps under it. The lofty mass cracked as if it had been a marble slab — it

broke, and, resolving itself into a foaming cataract, came rushing down with a rumbling noise like that of distant thunder. It was an avalanche that had fallen, not indeed over Rudy and his uncle, but near them — all too near!

"Hold fast, Rudy — hold fast with all your might!" cried his uncle.

And Rudy threw his arms around the trunk of a tree that was close by, while his uncle climbed above him and held fast to the branches of the tree. The avalanche rolled past at a little distance from them, but the gust of wind that swept like the tail of a hurricane after it, rattled around the trees and bushes, snapped them asunder as if they had been but dry rushes, and cast them down in all directions. Rudy was dashed to the ground, for the trunk of the tree to which he had clung was thus overthrown; the upper part was flung to a great distance. There, amidst the shattered branches, lay his poor uncle with his skull fractured! His hand was still warm, but it would have been impossible to recognize his face. Rudy stood pale and trembling; it was the first shock in his young life — the first moment he had ever felt terror.

Late in the evening he reached his home with the fatal tidings — his home which was now to be the abode of sorrow. The bereaved wife stood like a statue — she did not utter a word — she did not shed a tear; and it was not until the corpse was brought in that her grief found its natural vent. The poor cretin stole away to his bed, and nothing was seen of him during the whole of the next day; toward evening he came to Rudy.

"Will you write a letter for me?" he asked. "Saperli cannot write — Saperli can only go down to the post-office with the letter."

"A letter for you?" exclaimed Rudy; "and to whom?"

"To our Lord Christ!"

"Whom do you mean?"

And the half-idiot, as the cretin was called, looked with a most touching expression at Rudy, clasped his hands, and said solemnly and reverentially, —

"Jesus Christ! Saperli would send Him a letter to pray of Him that Saperli may lie dead, and not the good master of the house here."

And Rudy took his hand and wrung it. "That letter would not reach up yonder — that letter would not restore to us him we have lost."

But Rudy found it very difficult to convince Saperli of the impossibility of his wishes.

"Now you must be the support of the house," said his aunt to him; and Rudy became such.

BABETTE.

Who is the best marksman in the Canton Valais? The chamois well knew. "Save yourselves from Rudy!" they might have said. And "who is the handsomest marksman?" "O! it is Rudy!" said the girls. But they did not add, "Save yourselves from Rudy;" neither did the sober mothers say so, for he bowed as politely to them as to the young girls. He was so brave and so joyous, his cheeks so brown, his teeth so white, his dark eyes so sparkling. A handsome young man he was, and only twenty years of age. The most ice-chill water never seemed too cold for him when he was swimming — in fact he was like a fish in the water; he could climb better than any one else; he could also cling fast, like a snail, to the wall of rock. There were good muscles and sinews in him; this was quite evident whenever he made a spring. He had learned first from the cat how to spring, and from the chamois afterward. Rudy had the reputation of being the best guide on the mountain, and he could have made a great deal of money by this occupation. His uncle had also taught him the cooper's trade, but he had no inclination for that. He cared for nothing but chamois hunting; in this he delighted, and *it* also brought in money. Rudy would be an excellent match, it was said, if he only did not look too high. He was such a good dancer that the girls who were his partners often dreamt of him, and more than one let her thoughts dwell on him even after she awoke.

"He kissed me in the dance!" said Annette, the schoolmaster's daughter, to her dearest friend; but she should not have said this even to her dearest friend. Such secrets are seldom kept: like sand in a bag that has holes, they ooze out. Therefore, however well behaved Rudy might be, it was

soon spread about that he kissed in the dance; and yet he had never kissed her whom he would have liked to kiss.

"Take care of him!" said an old hunter; "he has kissed Annette. He has begun with A, and he will kiss through the whole alphabet."

A kiss in the dance was all that the gossips could find to bring against Rudy; but he certainly had kissed Annette, and yet she was not the flower of his heart.

Below at Bex, amidst the great walnut-trees, close to a small rushing mountain stream, lived the rich miller. His dwelling-house was a large building of three stories high, with small turrets; its roof was composed of shavings of wood covered with tinned iron plates, which shone in sunshine and moonshine; on the highest turret was a vane, a glittering arrow passed through an apple, in allusion to Tell's celebrated arrow-shot. The mill was a conspicuous object, and permitted itself to be sketched or written about; but the miller's daughter did not permit herself to be described in writing or to be sketched — so at least Rudy would have said, And yet her image was engraved on his heart; both her eyes blazed in on it, so that it was quite in flames. The fire had, like other fires, come on suddenly; and the strangest part of it was, that the miller's daughter, the charming Babette, was quite ignorant of it, for she and Rudy had never so much as spoken two words to each other.

The miller was rich, and, on account of his wealth, Babette was rather high to aspire to. "But nothing is so high," said Rudy to himself, "that one may not aspire to it. One must climb perseveringly, and if one has confidence one does not fall." He had received this teaching in his early home.

It so happened that Rudy had some business to transact at Bex. It was a long journey to that place, for there was then no railroad. From the glaciers of the Rhone, immediately at the foot of the Simplon, among many and often shifting mountain peaks, stretches the broad valley of the Canton Valais, with its mighty river, the Rhone, whose waters are often so swollen as to overflow its banks, inundating fields and roads, and destroying all. Between the towns of Sion and St. Maurice the valley takes a turn, bending like an elbow, and below

St. Maurice becomes so narrow that there is only space for the bed of the river and the confined carriage-road. An old tower, like the guardian of the Canton Valais, which ends here, stands on the side of the mountain, and commands a view over the stone bridge to the custom-house on the other side, where the Canton Vaud commences ; and nearest of the not very distant towns lies Bex. In this part, at every step forward, are displayed increased fruitfulness and abundance ; one enters, as it were, a grove of chestnut and walnut-trees. Here and there peep forth cypresses and pomegranates. It is almost as warm there as in Italy,

Rudy reached Bex, got through his business, and looked about him ; but not a soul (putting Babette out of the question) belonging to the mill did he see. This was not what he wanted.

Evening came on ; the air was filled with the perfume of the wild thyme and the blossoming lime-trees ; there lay what seemed a shining sky-blue veil over the wooded green hills ; a stillness reigned around — not the stillness of sleep, not the stillness of death — no, it was as if all nature was holding its breath, in order that its image might be photographed upon the blue surface of the heavens above. Here and there amidst the trees stood poles, or posts, which conveyed the wires of the telegraph along the silent valley ; close against one of these leaned an object, so motionless that one might have thought it was the decayed trunk of a tree, but it was Rudy, who was standing there as still as was all around him at that moment. He was not sleeping, neither was he dead ; but, as through the wires of the telegraph there are often transmitted the great events of the world, and matters of the utmost importance to individuals, without the wires, by the slightest tremor or the faintest tone, betraying them, so there passed through Rudy's mind anxious overwhelming thoughts, fraught with the happiness of his future life, and constituting, from this time forth, his one unchanging aim. His eyes were fixed on one point before him, and that was a light in the parlor of the miller's house, where Babette resided. Rudy stood so still that one might have thought he was on the watch to fire at a chamois ; but he was himself at that moment like a

chamois, which one minute could stand as if it were chiseled out of the rock, and suddenly, if a stone but rolled past, would make a spring and leave the hunter in the lurch. And thus did Rudy, for a thought rolled through his mind.

"Never despair!" said he; "a visit to the mill, say good evening to the miller, and good day to Babette. One does not fall unless one fears to do so. If I am to be Babette's husband, she must see me some day or other."

And Rudy laughed, and made up his mind to go to the miller's; he knew what he wanted, and that was to marry Babette.

The stream, with its yellowish-white water, was dashing on; the willows and lime-trees hung over it. Rudy, as it stands in the old nursery rhyme, —

> "Found to the miller's house his way;
> But there was nobody at home,
> Except a pussy cat at play!"

The cat, which was standing on the steps, put up its back and mewed; but Rudy was no way inclined to listen to it. He knocked at the door; no one seemed to hear him, no one answered. The cat mewed again. Had Rudy been still a little boy, he might have understood the cat's language, and heard that it said "No one is at home." But now he had to go to the mill to make the necessary inquiries, and there he was told that the master had gone on a long journey to the town of Interlaken, — "Inter Lacus, amidst the lakes," as the schoolmaster, Annette's father, in his great learning had explained the name.

Ah! so far away, then, were the miller and Babette? There was a great shooting match to be held at Interlaken; it was to begin the next morning, and to last for eight days. The Swiss from all the German cantons were to assemble there.

Poor Rudy! it was not a fortunate time for him to have come to Bex. He had only to return again; and he did so, taking the road over St. Maurice and Sion to his own valley, his own hills. But he was not disheartened. When the sun rose next morning, he was in high spirits, but indeed they had never been depressed.

"Babette is at Interlaken, a journey of many days from this," he said to himself. "It is a long way off if one goes by

the circuitous high-road, but not so far if one cuts across the mountains, and that way just suits a chamois hunter. I have gone that way before; over yonder lies my early home, where, as a little boy, I lived with my grandfather. And there are shooting matches at Interlaken; I shall take my place as the first there, and there also shall I be with Babette, when I become acquainted with her."

Carrying his light knapsack, with his Sunday finery in it, with his musket and game-bag, Rudy went up the mountain, the shortest way, yet still tolerably long; but the shooting matches were only to commence that day, and were to continue for a week. During all that time, he had been assured, the miller and Babette would stay with their relatives at Interlaken. So over the Gemmi trudged Rudy; he proposed descending near Grindelwald.

In high health and spirits he set off, enjoying the fresh, pure, and invigorating mountain air. The valleys sank deeper, the horizon became more extensive; here a snow-crested summit, there another, and speedily the whole of the bright shining Alpine range, became visible. Rudy knew well every ice-clad peak. He kept his course opposite to Schreckhorn, which raised its white powdered stone finger high toward the blue vault above.

At length he had crossed the loftier mountain ridge. The pasture lands sloped down toward the valley that was his former home. The air was pleasant, his thoughts were pleasant; hill and dale were blooming with flowers and verdure, and his heart was full of the glowing dreams of youth; he felt as if old age, as if death, were never to approach him; life, power, enjoyment were before him. Free as a bird, light as a bird was Rudy; and the swallows flew past him, and sang as in the days of his childhood, "We and you, and you and we!" All was motion and pleasure.

Beneath lay the green velvet meadows, dotted with brown wooden houses; the river Lütschine rushed foaming along. He saw the glacier with its borders like green glass edging the dirty snow, and he saw the deep chasms, while the sound of the church-bells came upon his ear, as if they were ringing a welcome to his old home. His heart beat rapidly, and his

mind became so full of old recollections that for a moment he almost forgot Babette.

He was again traversing the same road where, as a little boy, he had stood along with other children to sell their carved wooden toy houses. Yonder, above the pine-trees, still stood his grandfather's house, but strangers dwelt there now. The children came running after him, as formerly; they wished to sell their little wares. One of them offered him an Alpine rose; Rudy took it as a good omen, and thought of Babette. He had soon crossed the bridge where the two Lütschines unite, and reached the smiling country where the walnut and other embowering trees afford grateful shade. He soon perceived waving flags, and beheld the white cross on the red ground — the standard of the Swiss as of the Danes — and before him lay Interlaken.

Rudy thought it was certainly a splendid town — a Swiss town in its holiday dress. It was not, like other market towns, a heap of heavy stone houses, stiff, foreign-looking, and aiming at grandeur; no! it looked as if the wooden houses from the hills above had taken a start into the green valley beneath, with its clear stream whose waters rushed swiftly as an arrow, and had ranged themselves into rows — somewhat uneven, it is true — to form the street. And that prettiest of all, the street which had been built since Rudy, as a little boy, had last been there — *that* seemed to be composed of all the nicest wooden houses his grandfather had cut out, and with which the cupboard at home had been filled. These seemed to have transplanted themselves there, and to have grown in size, as the old chestnut-trees had done.

Every house almost was a hotel, as it was called, with carved wooden work round the windows and balconies, with smart-looking roofs, and before each house a flower garden, between it and the wide macadamized high-road. Near these houses, but only on one side of the road, stood some other houses: had they formed a double row, they would have concealed the fresh green meadow, where wandered the cows with bells that rang as among the high Alpine pastures. The valley was encircled by lofty hills, which, about the centre, seemed to retire a little to one side, so as to render visible

that glittering snow-white Jungfrau, the most beautiful in form of all the mountains of Switzerland.

What a number of gayly dressed gentlemen and ladies from foreign lands — what crowds of Swiss from the adjacent cantons! The candidates for the prizes carried the numbers of their shots in a garland round their hats. There was music of all kinds — singing, hand-organs, and wind instruments, shouting and racket. The houses and bridges were adorned with verses and emblems. Flags and banners waved; the firing of gun after gun was heard, and that was the best music to Rudy's ears. Amidst all this excitement he almost forgot Babette, for whose sake only he had gone there.

Crowds were thronging to the target-shooting. Rudy was soon among them, and he was always the luckiest — the best shot — for he always struck the bull's-eye.

"Who is that young stranger — that capital marksman?" was asked around. "He speaks the French language as they speak it in the Canton Valais; he also expresses himself fluently in our German," said several people.

"When a child he lived here in the valley, near Grindelwald," replied some one.

The youth was full of life; his eyes sparkled, his aim was steady, his arm sure, and therefore his shots always told. Good fortune bestows courage, and Rudy had always courage. He had soon a whole circle of friends round him. Every one noticed him; in short, he became the observed of all observers. Babette had almost vanished from his thoughts. Just then a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a rough voice accosted him in the French language with —

"You are from the Canton Valais?"

Rudy turned round, and beheld a red jolly countenance and a stout person. It was the rich miller from Bex; his broad bulk hid the slender lovely Babette, who, however, soon came forward with her dark, bright eyes. The rich miller was very proud that it was a huntsman from his own canton that had been declared the best shot, and was so much distinguished and so much praised. Rudy was truly the child of good fortune; what he had travelled so far to look for, but had since his arrival nearly forgotten, now sought him.

When at a distance from home one meets persons from thence, acquaintance is speedily made, and people speak as if they knew each other. Rudy held the first place at the shooting matches, as the miller held the first place at Bex, on account of his money and his mill. So the two men shook hands, although they had never met before; Babette, too, held out her hand frankly to Rudy, and he pressed it warmly, and gazed with such admiration at her that she became scarlet.

The miller talked of the long journey they had made, and the numerous large towns they had seen, and how they had travelled both by steam and by post.

"I came the shorter way," said Rudy; "I went over the mountains. There is no road so high that one cannot venture to take it."

"Aye, at the risk of breaking one's neck!" replied the Miller; "and you look just like one who will some day or other break his neck — you are so daring!"

"One does not fall unless one has the fear of doing so," said Rudy.

And the miller's relations at Interlaken, with whom he and Babette were staying, invited Rudy to visit them, since he came from the same canton as did their kindred. It was a pleasant invitation for Rudy. Luck was with him, as it always is with those who depend upon themselves, and remember that "our Lord bestows nuts upon us, but He does not crack them for us!"

And Rudy sat, almost like one of the family, amongst the miller's relations, and a toast was drunk in honor of the best shot, to which Rudy returned thanks, after clinking glasses with Babette.

In the evening the whole party took a walk on the pretty avenue past the gay looking hotels under the walnut-trees; and there was such a crowd, and so much pushing, that Rudy had to offer his arm to Babette. He told her how happy he was to have met people from the Canton Vaud, for Vaud and Valais were close neighbors. He spoke so cordially that Babette could not resist slightly squeezing his hand. They seemed almost like old acquaintances, and she was very lively — that pretty little girl. Rudy was much amused at her re-

marks on what was absurd and over-fine in the dress of the foreign ladies, and the affectation of some of them; but she did not wish to ridicule them, for there might be some excellent people among them — yes, nice amiable people, Babette was sure of that, for she had a godmother who was a very superior English lady. Eighteen years before, when Babette was christened, that lady was at Bex; she had given Babette the valuable brooch she wore. Her godmother had written to her twice, and this year they were to have met her at Interlaken, whither she was coming with her daughters; they were old maids, going on for thirty, said Babette — she herself was only eighteen.

The tongue in her pretty little mouth was not still for a moment, and all that she said appeared to Rudy as matters of the greatest importance. And he told her what he had to tell — told her how he had been to Bex, how well he knew the mill, and how often he had seen her, though, of course, she had never remarked him. He said he had been more distressed than he could tell, when he found that she and her father were away, far away; but still not too far to prevent one from scrambling over the wall that made the road so long.

He said all this, and he said a great deal more; he told her how much she occupied his thoughts, and that it was on her account, and not for the sake of the shooting matches, that he had come to Interlaken.

Babette became very silent — it was almost too much, all that he confided to her.

As they walked on, the sun sank behind the lofty heights, and the Jungfrau stood in strong relief, clothed in a splendor and brilliancy reflected by the green woods of the surrounding hills. Every one stood still and gazed at it; Rudy and Babette also stood and looked at the magnificent scene.

"Nothing can be more beautiful than this!" said Babette.

"Nothing!" said Rudy, with his eyes fixed upon Babette.

"To-morrow I must go," he added a little after.

"Come and visit us at Bex," whispered Babette; "my father will be so glad to see you."

ON THE WAY HOME.

O! how much had not Rudy to carry next day when he started on his journey homewards over the mountains! He had actually to carry two handsome guns, three silver goblets, and a silver coffee-pot — the latter would be of use when he set up a house. But these valuables were not the weightiest load he had to bear; a still weightier load he had to carry — or did it carry him? — over the high, high hills.

The road was rough; the weather was dismal, gloomy, and rainy; the clouds hung like a mourning veil over the summits of the mountains, and shrouded their shining peaks. From the woods had resounded the last stroke of the axe, and down the side of the hill rolled the trunks of the trees; they looked like sticks from the vast heights above, but nearer they were seen to be like the thick masts of ships. The river murmured with its monotonous sound, the wind whistled, the clouds began to sail hurriedly along.

Close by Rudy suddenly appeared a young girl; he had not observed her until she was quite near him. She also was going to cross the mountain. Her eyes had an extraordinary power; they seemed to have a spell in them — they were so clear, so deep, so unfathomable.

"Have you a lover?" asked Rudy. All his thoughts were filled with love.

"I have none," she replied with a laugh, but it seemed as if she did not speak the truth. "Let us not go the long way round. We must keep to the left; it is shorter."

"Yes — to fall into some crevasse," said Rudy. "You should know the paths better if you take upon yourself to be a guide."

"I know the way well," she rejoined, "and I have my wits about me. Your thoughts are down yonder in the valley. Up here one should think of the Ice Maiden. Mankind say that she is not friendly to their race."

"I am not in the least afraid of her," said Rudy. "She could not keep me when I was a child; she shall not catch me now I am a grown-up man."

It became very dark, the rain fell, and it began to snow heavily; it dazzled the eyes, and blinded them.

"Give me your hand, and I will help you to mount upward," said the girl, as she touched him with her ice-cold fingers.

"*You* help me!" cried Rudy. "I do not yet require a woman's help in climbing;" and he walked on more briskly away from her. The snow-storm thickened like a curtain around him, the wind moaned, and behind him he heard the girl laughing and singing. It sounded so strangely. It was surely Glamourie, she surely, one of the attendants of the Ice Maiden; Rudy had heard of such things when, as a little boy, he had spent a night on the mountains, on his journey over the hills.

The snow fell more thickly, the clouds lay below him. He looked back; there was no one to be seen, but he heard laughter and jeering, and it did not seem to come from a human being.

When at length Rudy had reached the highest part of the mountain, where the path led down to the valley of the Rhone, he perceived on the pale blue of the horizon, in the direction of Chamouny, two glittering stars. They shone so brightly; and he thought of Babette, of himself, and of his happiness, and became warm with these thoughts.

THE VISIT TO THE MILL.

"You have really brought costly things home," said his old foster-mother, and her strange, eagle eyes sparkled, while she worked her thin, wrinkled neck even more quickly than usual. "You carry good luck with you, Rudy. I must kiss you, my dear boy."

Rudy allowed himself to be kissed, but it was evident by his countenance that he did not relish this domestic greeting.

"How handsome you are, Rudy!" exclaimed the old woman.

"O! don't flatter me," replied Rudy, laughing; but he was pleased at the compliment nevertheless.

"I repeat it," said the old woman, "and good fortune smiles on you."

"Yes, I believe you are right there," he said, while his thoughts strayed to Babette.

Never before had he longed so much for the deep valley.

"They must have come back," he said to himself; "it is now more than two days over the time they fixed for their return. I must go to Bex."

And to Bex he went. The miller and his daughter were at home; he was well received, and many greetings were given to him from the family at Interlaken. Babette did not speak much; she had become very silent. But her eyes spoke, and that was quite enough for Rudy. The miller, who generally had enough to say, and was accustomed to joke and have all his jokes laughed at, for he was *the rich miller*, seemed to prefer listening to Rudy's stirring adventures, and hearing him tell of all the difficulties and dangers that the chamois hunter had to encounter on the mountain heights — how he had to crawl along the unsafe snowy cornice-work on the edges of the hills, which was attached to the rocks by the force of the wind and weather, and tread the frail bridges the snow-storm had cast over many a deep abyss.

Rudy spoke with much spirit, and his eyes sparkled while he described the life of a hunter, the cunning of the chamois and the wonderful springs they took, the mighty föhn, and the rolling avalanche. He observed that, at every new description, he won more and more upon the miller, and that the latter was particularly interested in his account of the lämmergeier and the bold royal eagle.

Not far from Bex, in the Canton Valais, there was an eagle's nest, built most ingeniously under a projecting platform of rock, on the margin of the hill; there was a young one in it, which no one could take. An Englishman had, a few days before, offered Rudy a large handful of gold if he would bring him the young eagle alive.

"But there are limits even to the most reckless daring," said Rudy. "The young eagle up there is not to be got at: it would be madness to make the attempt."

And the wine circulated fast, and the conversation flowed on fast, and Rudy thought the evening was much too short, although it was past midnight when he left the miller's house after this his first visit.

The lights shone for a short time through the windows, and were reflected on the green branches of the trees, while

through the skylight on the roof, which was open, crept out the parlor Cat, and met in the water conduit on the roof the kitchen Cat.

"Don't you see that there is something new going on here?" said the parlor Cat. "There is secret love-making in the house. The father knows nothing of it yet. Rudy and Babette have been all the evening treading on each other's toes under the table; they trod on me twice, but I did not mew, for that would have aroused suspicion."

"Well *I* would have done it," said the kitchen Cat.

"What might suit the kitchen would not do in the parlor," replied the parlor Cat. "I should like very much to know what the miller will say when he hears of this engagement."

Yes, indeed — what would the miller say? *That* Rudy also was anxious to know. He could not bring himself to wait long. Therefore, before many days had passed, when the omnibus rolled over the bridge between the Cantons Valais and Vaud, Rudy sat in it, with plenty of confidence as usual, and pleasant thoughts of the favorable answer he expected that evening.

And when the evening had come, and the omnibus was returning, Rudy also sat in it, going homewards. But, at the miller's, the parlor Cat jumped out again.

"Look here, you from the kitchen — the miller knows everything now. There was a strange end to the affair. Rudy came here toward the afternoon, and he and Babette had a great deal to whisper about; they stood on the path a little below the miller's room. I lay at their feet, but they had neither eyes nor thoughts for me.

"'I will go straight to your father,' said Rudy; 'my proposal is honest and honorable.'

"'Shall I go with you,' said Babette, 'that I may give you courage?'

"'I have plenty of courage,' replied Rudy, 'but if you are with me, he must put some control upon himself, whether he likes the matter or not.'

"So they went in. Rudy trod heavily on my tail — he is very clumsy. I mewed, but neither he nor Babette had ears for me. They opened the door, and entered together, and I

with them, but I sprang up to the back of a chair. I could scarcely hear what Rudy said, but I heard how the master blazed forth: it was a regular turning him out of his doors up to the mountains and the chamois. Rudy might look after these, but not after our little Babette."

"But what did they say?" asked the kitchen Cat.

"Say! they said all that is generally said under such circumstances when people go a-wooing. 'I love her, and she loves me; and when there is milk in the can for one, there is milk in the can for two.'

"'But she is far above you,' said the Miller; 'she has lots of gold, and you have none. Don't you see that you cannot aspire to her?'

"'There is nothing or no one so high that one may not reach if one is only determined to do so,' said Rudy, getting angry.

"'But you said not long since that you could not reach the young eagle in its nest. Babette is a still higher and more difficult prize for you to take.'

"'I will take them both,' replied Rudy.

"'Very well! I will give her to you when you bring me the young eaglet alive,' said the Miller, and he laughed until the tears stood in his eyes. 'But now, thank you for your visit, Rudy! If you come again to-morrow, you will find no one at home. Farewell, Rudy!'

"And Babette also said farewell, in as timid and pitiable a voice as that of a little kitten which cannot see its mother."

"'A promise is a promise, and a man is a man!' said Rudy. 'Do not weep, Babette; I shall bring the young eagle.'

"'You will break your neck, I hope!' exclaimed the Miller; 'then we shall be free of this bad job.' I call that sending him off with a flea in his ear! Now Rudy is gone, and Babette sits and cries, but the miller sings German songs which he learnt in his journey. I shall not distress myself about the matter; it would do no good."

"But it is all very curious," said the kitchen Cat.

THE EAGLE'S NEST.

From the mountain path came the sound of a person whistling in a strain so lively that it betokened good-humor and undaunted courage. The whistler was Rudy; he was going to his friend Vesinand.

"You must help me! We shall take Ragli with us. I must carry off the young eagle up yonder under the shelving rock!"

"Had you not better try first to take down the moon? That would be about as hopeful an undertaking," said Vesinand. "You are in great spirits, I see."

"Yes, for I am thinking of my wedding. But now, to speak seriously, you shall know how matters stand with me."

And Vesinand and Ragli were soon made acquainted with what Rudy wished.

"You are a daring fellow," they said, "but you won't succeed — you will break your neck."

"One does not fall if one has no fear!" said Rudy.

About midnight they set out with alpenstocks, ladders, and ropes. The road lay through copsewood and brushwood, over rolling stones — upward, always upward, upward in the dark and gloomy night. The waters roared below, the waters murmured above, humid clouds swept heavily along. The hunters reached at length the precipitous ridge of rock. It became even darker here, for the walls of rock almost met, and light penetrated only a little way down from the open space above. Close by, under them, was a deep abyss, with its hoarse-sounding, raging water.

They sat all three quite still. They had to await the dawn of day, when the parent eagle should fly out; then only could they fire if they had any hope to capture the young one. Rudy sat as still as if he had been a portion of the rock on which he sat. He held his gun ready to fire; his eyes were steadily fixed on the highest part of the cleft, under a projecting rock of which the eagle's nest was concealed. The three hunters had long to wait.

At length, high above them was heard a crashing, whirring noise; the air was darkened by a large object soaring in it.

Two guns were ready to aim at the enormous eagle the moment it flew from its nest. A shot was fired; for an instant the outspread wings fluttered, and then the bird began to sink slowly, and it seemed as if with its size and the stretch of its wings it would fill the whole chasm, and in its fall drag the hunters down with it. The eagle disappeared in the abyss below; the cracking of the trees and bushes was heard, which were snapped and crushed in the fall of the stupendous bird.

And now commenced the business that had brought the hunters there. Three of the longest ladders were tied securely together. They were intended to reach the outermost and last stepping-place on the margin of the abyss; but they did not reach so high up, and smooth as a well-built wall was the perpendicular rocky ascent a good way higher up, where the nest was hidden under the shelter of the uppermost projecting portion of rock. After some consultation the young men came to the conclusion, that there was nothing better to be done than to hoist far up two more ladders tied together, and then to attach these to the three which had already been raised. With immense difficulty they pushed the two ladders up, and the ropes were made fast; the ladders shot out from over the rock, and hung there swaying in the air above the unfathomable depth beneath. Rudy had placed himself already on the lowest step. It was an ice-cold morning; the mist was rising heavily from the dark chasm below. Rudy sat as a fly sits upon some swinging straw which a bird, building its nest, might have dropped on the edge of the lofty eyrie it had chosen for its site; but the insect could fly if the straw gave way — Rudy could but break his neck. The wind was howling around him, and away in the abyss below roared the gushing water from the melting glacier — the Ice Maiden's palace.

His ascent set the ladder into a tremulous motion, as the spider does which holds fast to its long waving slender thread. When Rudy had gained the top of the fourth ladder, he felt more confidence in them: he knew that they had been bound together by sure and skillful hands, though they dangled as if they had had but slight fastenings.

But there was even more dangerous work before Rudy than mounting a line of ladders that now swayed like a frame of

rushes in the air, and now knocked against the perpendicular rock: he had to climb as a cat climbs. But Rudy could do that, thanks to the cat who had taught him. He did not perceive the presence of Vertigo, who trod the air behind him, and stretched forth her polypus-arms after him. He gained, at length, the last step of the highest ladder, and then he observed that he had not got high enough even to see into the nest. It was only by using his hands that he could raise himself up to it; he tried if the lowest part of the thick interlaced underwood, which formed the base of the nest, was sufficiently strong; and when he had assured himself that the stunted trees were firm, he swung himself up by them from the ladder, until his head and breast had reached the level of the nest. But then poured forth on him a stifling stench of carrion; for putrefied lambs, chamois, and birds lay there crowded together.

Swimming-in-the-Head, a sister to Vertigo, though it could not overpower him, puffed the disgusting almost poisonous odor into his face, that he might become faint; and down below, in the black yawning ravine, upon the dank dashing waters, sat the Ice Maiden herself, with her long pale-green hair, and gazed upward with her death-giving eyes, while she exclaimed, —

"Now I will seize you!"

In a corner of the eagle's nest, Rudy beheld the eaglet sitting — a large and powerful creature, even though it could not yet fly. Rudy fixed his eyes on it, held on marvelously with one hand, and with the other hand cast a noose around the young eagle; it was captured alive, its legs were in the tightened cord, and Rudy flung the sling with the bird over his shoulder, so that the creature hung a good way down beneath him, as, with the help of a rope, he held on, until his foot touched at last the highest step of the ladder.

"Hold fast! don't fear to fall, and you will not do so!" Such was his early lesson, and Rudy acted on it: he held fast, crept down, and did not fall.

Then arose a shout of joy and congratulation. Rudy stood safely on the rocky ground, laden with his prize, the young eagle.

WHAT MORE THE PARLOR CAT HAD TO TELL.

"Here is what you demanded!" said Rudy, as he entered the miller's house at Bex, and placed on the floor a large basket. When he took its cover off, there glared forth two yellow eyes surrounded with a dark ring — eyes so flashing, so wild, that they looked as though they would burn or blast everything they saw; the short hard beak opened to bite; the neck was red and downy.

"The young eagle!" exclaimed the Miller. Babette screamed, and sprang to one side, but could not take her eyes off from Rudy and the eaglet.

"You are not to be frightened!" said the Miller, addressing Rudy.

"And you will keep your word," said Rudy; "every one has his object."

"But how is it that you did not break your neck?" asked the Miller.

"Because I held fast," replied Rudy; "and so I do now — I hold fast to Babette."

"Wait till you get her!" said the Miller, laughing, and Babette thought that was a good sign.

"Let us take the young eagle out of the basket; it is frightful to see how its eyes glare. How did you manage to capture it?"

Rudy had to describe his feat, and, as he spoke, the miller's eyes opened wider and wider.

"With your confidence and your good fortune, you might maintain three wives," said the Miller.

"O, thank you!" cried Rudy.

"But you won't get Babette just yet," said the Miller, slapping the young Alpine hunter with good-humor on his shoulder.

"Do you know there is something going on again here!" said the parlor Cat to the kitchen Cat. "Rudy has brought us the young eagle, and takes Babette as his reward. They have kissed each other in the father's presence! That was as good as a betrothal. The old man did not storm at all; he

kept in his claws, took an afternoon nap, and left the two to sit and chatter to each other. They have so much to say that they will not be tired talking till Christmas."

And they were not tired talking till Christmas. The wind whirled in eddies through the groves, and shook down the yellow leaves; the snow-drifts appeared in the valleys as well as on the lofty hills; the Ice Maiden sat in her proud palace, which she occupied during the winter time; the upright walls of rock were covered with sleet; enormous masses of ice-tapestry were to be seen where, in summer, the mountain streams came pouring down; fantastic garlands of crystal ice hung over the snow-powdered pine-trees. The Ice Maiden rode on the howling wind, over the deepest dales. The carpet of snow was laid down as far as Bex; she could go there, and see Rudy in the house where he now passed so much of his time with Babette. The wedding was to take place in summer, and they heard enough of it — their friends talked so much about it.

There came sunshine; the most beautiful Alpine roses bloomed. The lovely laughing Babette was as charming as the early spring — the spring which makes all the birds sing of summer-time, when was to be the wedding-day.

"How these two do sit and hang over each other!" exclaimed the parlor Cat. "I am sick of all this stuff."

THE ICE MAIDEN'S SCORN OF MANKIND.

Spring had unfolded her fresh green garlands of walnut and chestnut-trees which were bursting into bloom, particularly in the country that extends from the bridge at St. Maurice to the Lake of Geneva and the banks of the Rhone, which, with wild speed, rushes from its source under the green glaciers — the Ice Palace where the Ice Maiden dwells — whence, on the keen wind, she permits herself to be borne up to the highest fields of snow, and, in the warm sunshine, reclines on their drifting masses. Here she sat, and gazed fixedly down into the deep valley beneath, where human beings, like ants on a sunlit stone, were to be seen busily moving about.

"Beings of mental power, as the children of the sun call you," cried the Ice Maiden, "ye are but vermin! Let a snow-

ball but roll down, and you and your houses and your villages are crushed and overwhelmed." And she raised her proud head higher, and looked with death-threatening eyes around her and below her. But from the valley arose a strange sound: it was the blasting of rocks — the work of men — the forming of roads and tunnels before the railway was laid down.

"They are working underground like moles; they are digging passages in the rock, and therefore are heard these sounds like the reports of guns. I shall remove my palaces, for the noise is greater than the roar of thunder itself."

There ascended from the valley a thick smoke, which seemed agitated like a fluttering veil: it came curling up from the locomotive, which upon the newly opened railway drew the train, that, carriage linked to carriage, looked like a winding serpent. With an arrow's speed it shot past.

"They pretend to be the masters down yonder, these powers of mind!" exclaimed the Ice Maiden; "but the mighty powers of nature are still the rulers."

And she laughed, she sang; her voice resounded through the valley.

"An avalanche is falling!" cried the people down there.

Then the children of the sun sang in louder strains about the power of thought in mankind. It commands all, it brings the wide ocean under the yoke, levels mountains, fills up valleys; the power of thought in mankind makes them lords over the powers of nature.

Just at that moment, there came, crossing the snow-fields where the Ice Maiden sat, a party of travellers; they had bound themselves fast to each other, to be as one large body upon the slippery ice, near the deep abyss.

"Vermin!" she exclaimed. "*You* the lords of the powers of nature!" and she turned away from them, and looked scornfully toward the deep valley, where the railway train was rushing by.

"There they go, these thoughts! They are full of might; I see them everywhere. One stands alone like a king, others stand in a group, and yonder half of them are asleep. And when the steam-engine stops still, they get out and go their

way. The thoughts then go forth into the world." And she laughed.

"There goes another avalanche!" said the inhabitants of the valley.

"It will not reach us," cried two who sat together in the train — "two souls, but one mind," as has been said. These were Rudy and Babette; the miller accompanied them.

"Like baggage," he said, "I am with them as a sort of necessary appendage."

"There sit the two," said the Ice Maiden. "Many a chamois have I crushed, millions of Alpine roses have I snapped and broken, not a root left — I destroyed them all! Thought — power of mind, indeed!"

And she laughed again.

"There goes another avalanche!" said those down in the valley.

THE GODMOTHER.

At Montreux, one of the nearest towns, which, with Clarens, Bernex, and Crin, encircle the northeast part of the Lake of Geneva, resided Babette's godmother, the distinguished English lady, with her daughters and a young relation. They had only lately arrived, yet the miller had already paid them a visit, announced Babette's engagement, and told about Rudy and the young eagle, the visit to Interlaken — in short, the whole story; and it had highly interested his hearers, and pleased them with Rudy, Babette, and even the miller himself. They were invited all three to come to Montreux, and they went. Babette ought to see her godmother, and her godmother wished to see her.

At the little town of Villeneuve, about the end of the Lake of Geneva, lay the steamboat, that, in a voyage of half an hour, went from thence to Bernex, a little way below Montreux. It is a coast which has often been celebrated in song by poets. There, under the walnut-trees, on the banks of the deep bluish-green lake, Byron sat, and wrote his melodious verses about the prisoner in the gloomy mountain castle of Chillon. There, where Clarens is reflected amidst weeping willows in the clear water, wandered Rousseau, dreaming of Eloise. The river Rhone glides away under the lofty snow-

clad hills of Savoy; here there lies not far from its mouth a small island, so small that from the shore it looks as if it were but a toy islet. It is a patch of rocky ground, which about a century ago a lady caused to be walled round and covered with earth, in which three acacia-trees were planted; these now overshadow the whole island. Babette had always been charmed with this little islet; she thought it the loveliest spot that was to be seen on the whole voyage. She said she would like so much to land there — she must land there — it would be so delightful under these beautiful trees. But the steamer passed it by, and did not stop until it had reached Bernex.

The little party proceeded thence up amidst the white sun-lit walls that surrounded the vineyards in front of the little town of Montreux, where the peasants' houses are shaded by fig-trees, and laurels and cypresses grow in the gardens. Half way up the ascent stood the boarding-house where the god-mother lived.

The meeting was very cordial. The godmother was a stout pleasant-looking woman, with a round smiling face. When a child she must certainly have exhibited quite a Raphael-like cherub's head; it was still an angel's head, but older, and with silver-white hair clustering round it. The daughters were well dressed, elegant looking, tall and slender. The young cousin who was with them, and who was dressed in white almost from top to toe, and had red hair and red whiskers large enough to have been divided among three gentlemen, I began immediately to pay the utmost attention to little Babette.

Splendidly bound books and drawings were lying on the large table; music-books were also to be seen in the room. The balcony looked out upon the beautiful lake, which was so bright and calm that the mountains of Savoy, with their villages, woods, and snow-peaks, were clearly reflected in it.

Rudy, who was generally so lively and so undaunted, found himself not at all at his ease. He was obliged to be as much on his guard as if he were walking on pease over a slippery floor. How tediously time passed! It was like being in a treadmill. And now they were to go out to walk! This was quite as tiresome. Two steps forward and one backward Rudy had to take to keep pace with the others. Down to

Chillon, the gloomy old castle on the rocky island, they went, to look at instruments of torture and dungeons, rusty fetters attached to the rocky walls, stone pallets for those condemned to death, trap-doors through which the unfortunate creatures were hurled down to fall upon iron spikes amidst burning piles. They called it a pleasure to look at all these! A dreadful place of execution it was, elevated by Byron's verse into the world of poetry. Rudy viewed it only as a place of execution. He leaned against the wide stone embrasure of the window, and gazed down on the deep blue-green of the water, and over to the little solitary island with the three acacias: how much he wished himself there — free from the whole babbling party!

But Babette felt quite happy. She had been excessively amused, she said afterward; the cousin had "found her perfect."

"O yes — mere idle talk!" replied Rudy; and this was the first time he had ever said anything that did not please her.

The Englishman had made her a present of a little book as a souvenir of Chillon; it was Byron's poem, the "Prisoner of Chillon," translated into French, so that Babette was able to read it.

"The book may be good enough," said Rudy, "but the nicely combed fop who gave it to you is no favorite of mine."

"He looks like a meal-sack without meal," cried the Miller, laughing at his own wit.

Rudy laughed too, and said it was an excellent remark.

THE COUSIN.

When Rudy a few days afterward went to pay a visit to the miller, he found the young Englishman there. Babette had just placed before him a plate of trout, and she had taken much pains to decorate the dish. Rudy thought that was unnecessary. What was the Englishman doing there? What did he want? Why was he thus served and pampered by Babette? Rudy was jealous, and that pleased Babette. It amused her to see all the feelings of his heart — the strong and the weak. Love was to her as yet put a pastime, and she

played with Rudy's whole heart; but nevertheless it is certain that he was the centre of all her thoughts — the dearest, the most valued in this world. Still, the more gloomy he looked, the merrier her eyes laughed. She could almost have kissed the fair Englishman with the red whiskers, if she could by doing this have seen Rudy rush out in a rage; it would have shown her how greatly she was beloved by him.

This was not right, not wise in little Babette; but she was only nineteen years of age. She did not reflect on her unkindness to Rudy; still less did she think how her conduct might appear to the young Englishman, or if it were not lighter and more wanting in propriety than became the miller's modest, lately betrothed daughter.

Where the highway from Bex passes under the snow-clad rocky heights, which, in the language of the country, are called *Diablerets*, stood the mill, not far from a rapid rushing mountain stream of a grayish-white color and looking as if covered with soap-suds. It was not that which turned the mill, but a smaller stream, which on the other side of the river came tumbling down the rocks, and through a circular reservoir surrounded by stones in the road beneath, with its violence and speed forced itself up and ran into an inclosed basin, a wide dam which, above the rushing river, turned the large wheel of the mill. When the dam was full of water, it overflowed, and caused the path to be so damp and slippery that it was difficult to walk on it, and there was the chance of a fall into the water, and being carried by it more swiftly than pleasantly toward the mill. Such a mishap had nearly befallen the young Englishman. Equipped in white like a miller's man, he was climbing the path in the evening, guided by the light that shone from Babette's chamber window. He had never learned to climb, and had almost gone head foremost into the water, but escaped with wet arms and bespattered clothes. Covered with mud and dirty-looking, he arrived beneath Babette's window, clambered up the old linden-tree, and there began to mimic the owl — no other bird could he attempt to imitate. Babette heard the sounds, and peeped through the thin curtains; but when she saw the man in white and felt certain who he was, her little heart beat with terror,

and also with anger. She quickly extinguished her light, felt if the window were securely fastened, and then left him to screech at his leisure.

How terrible it would be if Rudy were now at the mill! But Rudy was not at the mill: no — it was much worse — he was close by outside. High words were spoken — angry words — there might be blows, there might even be murder!

Babette hastened to open her window, and, calling Rudy's name, bade him go away, adding that she could not permit him to remain there.

"You will not permit me to remain here!" he exclaimed. "Then this is an appointment! You are expecting some good friend — some one whom you prefer to me! Shame on you, Babette!"

"You are unbearable!" cried Babette; "I hate you!" and she burst into tears. "Go — go!"

"I have not deserved this," said Rudy, as he went away, his cheeks like fire, his heart like fire.

Babette threw herself weeping on her bed.

"And you can think ill of me, Rudy — of me who love you so dearly!"

She was angry — very angry, and that was good for her; she would otherwise have been deeply afflicted. As it was, she could fall asleep and slumber as only youth can do.

EVIL POWERS.

Rudy left Bex, and took his way homeward, choosing the path up the mountains, with its cold fresh air, where, amidst the deep snow the Ice Maiden holds her sway. The largest trees with their thick foliage looked, so far below, as if they were but potato tops; the pines and the bushes became smaller; the Alpine roses were covered with snow, which lay in single patches, like linen on a bleach-field. One solitary blue gentian stood in his path; he crushed it with the butt-end of his gun. Higher up two chamois showed themselves. Rudy's eyes sparkled, and his thoughts took flight into another channel, but he was not near enough for a sure aim. Higher still he ascended, where only a few blades of grass grew amidst the blocks of ice. The chamois passed in peace over the

fields of snow. Rudy pressed angrily on; thick mists gathered around him, and presently he found himself on the brink of the steep precipice of rock. The rain began to fall in torrents. He felt a burning thirst; his head was hot, his limbs were cold. He sought for his hunting flask, but it was empty: he had not given it a thought when he rushed up the mountains. He had never been ill in his life, but now he experienced a sensation like illness. He was very tired, and felt a strong desire to throw himself down and sleep, but water was streaming all around him. He tried to arouse himself, but every object seemed to be dancing in a strange manner before his eyes.

Suddenly he beheld what he had never before seen there — a newly built low hut that leaned against the rock, and in the doorway stood a young girl. He thought she was the schoolmaster's daughter, Annette, whom he had once kissed in the dance, but she was not Annette; yet certainly he had seen her before, perhaps near Grindelwald the evening he was returning home from the shooting matches at Interlaken.

"How did you come here?" he asked.

"I am at home," she replied; "I am watching my flocks."

"Your flocks! Where do they find grass? Here there is nothing but snow and rocks."

"You know much about it, to be sure!" she said, laughing. "Behind this, a little way down, is a very nice piece of pasture land. My goats go there. I take good care of them; I never miss one; I keep what belongs to me."

"You are stout-hearted," said Rudy.

"And so are you," she answered.

"If you have any milk, pray give me some; my thirst is almost intolerable."

"I have something better than milk," she replied; "you shall have that. To-day some travellers came here with their guides; they left half a flask of wine behind them. They will not return for it, and I shall not drink it, so you shall have it."

She went for the wine, poured it into a wooden goblet, and gave it to Rudy.

"It is excellent," said he; "I never tasted any wine so warm-

ing, so reviving." And his eyes beamed with a wondrous brilliancy; there came a thrill of enjoyment, a glow over him, as if every sorrow and every vexation were vanishing from his mind; the free gushing feeling of man's nature awoke in him.

"But you are surely Annette, the schoolmaster's daughter," he exclaimed. "Give me a kiss."

"First give me the pretty ring you wear on your finger."

"My betrothal ring?"

"Yes, just it," said the girl; and replenishing the goblet with wine, she held it to his lips, and again he drank. A strange sense of pleasure seemed to rush into his very blood. The whole world was his, he seemed to fancy — why torment himself? Everything is given for our gratification and enjoyment. The stream of life is the stream of happiness: flow on with it, let yourself be borne away on it — that is felicity. He gazed on the young girl. She was Annette, and yet *not* Annette; still less was she the magical phantom, as he had called *her* whom he had met near Grindelwald. The girl up here upon the mountain was fresh as the new-fallen snow, blooming like an Alpine rose, and lively as a kid; yet still formed from Adam's rib, a human being like Rudy himself. And he flung his arms around her, and gazed into her marvelously clear eyes. It was only for a moment; and in that moment — how shall it be expressed, how described in words? Was it the life of the spirit or the life of death which took possession of him? Was he raised higher, or was he sinking down into the deep icy abyss, deeper, always deeper? He beheld the walls of ice shining like blue-green glass; endless crevasses yawned around him, and the waters dripped with a sound like the chime of bells — they were clear as a pearl lighted by pale blue flames. The Ice Maiden kissed him; it chilled him through his whole body. He uttered a cry of horror, broke resolutely away from her, stumbled and fell; all became dark to his eyes, but he opened them again. The evil powers had played their game.

The Alpine girl was gone, the sheltering hut was gone; water poured down the naked rocks, and snow lay all around. Rudy was shivering with cold, soaked through to the very skin, and his ring was gone — the betrothal ring Babette had

given him. His gun lay on the snow close by him ; he took it up, and tried to discharge it, but it missed fire. Damp clouds rested like thick masses of snow on the mountain clefts. Vertigo sat there, and glared upon her powerless prey, and beneath her rang through the deep crevasse a sound as if a mass of rock had fallen down, and was crushing and carrying away everything that opposed it in its furious descent.

At the miller's, Babette sat and wept. Six days had elapsed since Rudy had been there — he who was in the wrong, he who ought to ask her forgiveness, for she loved him with her whole heart.

AT THE MILLER'S HOUSE.

"How frightfully foolish mankind are!" said the parlor Cat to the kitchen Cat. "It is all broken off now between Babette and Rudy. She sits and cries, and he thinks no more about her."

"I don't like that," said the kitchen Cat.

"Nor I either," replied the parlor Cat, "but I am not going to distress myself about it. Babette can take the red whiskers for her sweetheart. He has not been here since the evening he wanted to go on the roof."

The powers of evil carry on their game without and within us. Rudy was aware of this, and he reflected on it. What had passed around him and within him up yonder on the mountain? Was it sin, or was it a fever dream? He had never known fever or illness before. While he blamed Babette, he took a retrospective glance within himself. He thought of the wild tornado in his heart, the hot whirlwind which had recently broken loose there. Could he confess all to Babette — every thought which in the hour of temptation, might have been carried out? He had lost her ring, and in this very loss she had won him back. Was any confession due from her to him? He felt as if his heart were breaking when his thoughts reverted to her — so many recollections crowded on his mind. He saw in her a laughing merry child, full of life ; many an affectionate word she had addressed to him in the fullness of her heart came, like a ray of the sun, to gladden his soul, and soon it was all sunshine there for Babette.

She must, however, apologize to him, and she should do so.

He went to the miller's, and confession followed: it began with a kiss, and ended in Rudy's being the sinner. His great fault was that he could have doubted Babette's constancy — *that* was too bad of him! Such distrust, such impetuosity, might cause misery to them both. Yes, very true! and therefore Babette preached him a little sermon, which pleased herself vastly, and during which she looked very pretty. But, in one particular, Rudy was right — the godmother's nephew was a mere babbler. She would burn the book he had given her, and not keep the slightest article that would remind her of him.

"Well, it is all right again," said the parlor Cat. "Rudy has come back, they have made friends; and that is the greatest of pleasures, they say."

"I heard during the night," said the kitchen Cat, "the rats declaring that the greatest of pleasures was to eat candle-grease and to banquet on tainted meat. Which of them is to be believed, the lovers or the rats?"

"Neither of them," replied the parlor Cat. "It is always safest to believe no one."

The greatest happiness for Rudy and Babette was about to take place; the auspicious day, as it is called, was approaching — their wedding-day!

But not in the church at Bex, not at the miller's house, was the wedding to be solemnized: the godmother had requested that the marriage should be celebrated at her abode, and that the ceremony should be performed in the pretty little church at Montreux. The miller was very urgent that this arrangement should be agreed to; he alone knew what the godmother intended to bestow on the young couple: they were to receive from her a wedding gift that was well worth such a small concession to her wishes. The day was fixed; they were to go to Villeneuve the evening before, in order to proceed by an early steamer next morning to Montreux, that the godmother's daughters might adorn the bride.

"There ought to be a second day's wedding here in this house," said the parlor Cat; "else I am sure I would not give a mew for the whole affair."

"There is going to be a grand feast," replied the kitchen Cat. "Ducks and pigeons have been killed, and an entire deer hangs against the wall. My mouth waters when I look at all this. To-morrow they commence their journey."

Yes, to-morrow! That evening Rudy and Babette sat as a betrothed couple for the last time at the miller's house. Outside was to be seen the Alpine glow; the evening bells were ringing; the daughters of the sun sang, "That which is best will be!"

NIGHT VISIONS.

The sun had set; the clouds lay low in the valley of the Rhone; amidst the lofty mountains, the wind blew from the south — an African wind. Suddenly over the high Alps there arose a "föhn," which swept the clouds asunder; and when the wind had lulled, all became for a moment perfectly still. The scattered clouds hung in fantastic forms amidst the wooded hills that skirted the rapid Rhone; they hung in forms like those of the marine animals of the antediluvian world, like eagles hovering in the air, and like frogs springing in a marsh; they sank down over the gushing river, and seemed to sail upon it, yet it was in the air they sailed. The current carried with it an uprooted pine-tree; the water whirled in eddies around it. It was Vertigo and some of her sisters that were thus dancing in circles upon the foaming stream. The moon shone on the snow-capped hills, on the dark woods, on the curious white clouds — those appearances of the night that seem to be the spirits of nature. The mountain peasant saw them through his little window; they sailed outside in hosts before the Ice Maiden who came from her glacier palace. She sat on a frail skiff, the uprooted pine; the water from the glaciers bore her down to the river near the lake.

"The wedding guests are coming!" the air and the waters seemed to murmur and to sing.

Warnings without, warnings within! Babette had an extraordinary dream.

It seemed to her as if she were married to Rudy, and had been so for many years; that he was out chamois hunting, but she was at home; and that the young Englishman with the

red whiskers was sitting with her. His eyes were full of passion, his words had as it were a magic power in them; he held out his hand to her, and she felt compelled to go with him; they went forth from her home, and went always downward. And Babette felt as if there were a weight in her heart, which was becoming every moment heavier. She was committing a sin against Rudy — a sin against God. And suddenly she found herself forsaken; her dress was torn to pieces by thorns, her hair was gray. She looked upward in deep distress, and on the margin of a mountain ridge she beheld Rudy. She stretched her arms up toward him, but did not dare either to call to him or to pray; and neither would have been of any avail, for she soon perceived that it was not himself, but only his shooting jacket and cap, which were hanging on an alpenstock, as hunters sometimes place them to deceive the chamois. And in great misery Babette exclaimed, —

"O that I had died on my wedding-day — the day that was the happiest of my life! O Lord my God! that would have been a mercy — a blessing! That would have been the best thing that could have happened for me and Rudy. No one knows his future fate." And in impious despair she cast herself down into the deep mountain chasm. A string seemed to have broken — a tone of sorrow was echoed around.

Babette awoke. Her vision was at an end, and what had happened in the dream-world had partially vanished from her mind; but she knew that she had dreamt something frightful, and dreamt about the young Englishman, whom she had not seen or thought of for several months. Could he still be at Montreux? Would she see him at her wedding? A slight shade of displeasure stole around Babette's pretty mouth, and for a moment her eyebrows knitted; but soon came a smile and a gay sparkle in her eye. The sun was shining so brightly without, and to-morrow was her and Rudy's wedding-day!

He was already in the parlor when she came down, and shortly after they set off for Villeneuve. The two were all happiness, and the miller likewise; he laughed and joked, and was in the highest spirits. A kind father, a good soul, he was.

"Now we have the house to ourselves," said the parlor Cat.

THE CONCLUSION.

It was not yet late in the day when the three joyous travellers reached Villeneuve. After they had dined, the miller placed himself in a comfortable arm-chair with his pipe, intending, when he had done smoking, to take a short nap. The affianced couple went arm in arm out of the town, along the high-road, under the wooded hills that bordered the blue-green lake. The gray walls and heavy towers of the melancholy looking Chillon were reflected in the clear water. The little island with the three acacias seemed quite near: it looked like a bouquet on the calm lake.

"How charming it must be over yonder!" exclaimed Babette, who felt again the greatest desire to go to it; and her wish might be gratified at once, for a boat was lying close to the bank, and the rope by which it was secured was easy to undo. There was no one to be seen of whom they could ask permission to take it, so they got into it without leave. Rudy knew very well how to row. The oars, like the fins of a fish, divided the mass of water that is so pliant and yet so potent, so strong to bear, so ready to swallow — gentle, smiling, smoothness itself, and yet terror-inspiring and mighty to destroy. A line of foam floated behind the boat, which, in a few minutes, arrived at the little island, where the happy pair immediately landed. There was just room for two to dance.

Rudy swung Babette three or four times round, and then they sat down on the little bench under the drooping acacia, and looked into each other's eyes, and held each other's hands, while around them streamed the last rays of the setting sun. The pine forests on the hills assumed a purplish red tint, resembling the hue of the blooming heather; and where the trees stopped, and the bare rocks stood forward, there was a rich lustre, as if the mountain were transparent. The skies were brilliant with a crimson glow; the whole lake was covered with a tinge of pink, as if it had been thickly strewn with fresh blushing roses. As the shades of evening gathered around the snow-decked mountains of Savoy, they became of a dark-blue in color, but the highest peaks shone like red lava, and for a moment reflected their light on the mountain forms

before these vast masses were lost in darkness. It was the Alpine glow, and Rudy and Babette thought they had never before beheld one so magnificent. The snow-bedecked *Dent du Midi* gleamed like the disk of the full moon when it shows itself above the horizon.

"O, what beauty! O, what pleasure!" exclaimed the lovers at the same time.

"Earth can bestow no more on me," said Rudy; "an evening like this is as a whole life. How often have I been sensible of my good fortune, as I am sensible of it now, and have thought that, if everything were to come at once to an end for me, I have lived a happy life! What a blessed world is this! One day ends, but another begins, and I always fancy the last is the brightest. Our Lord is infinitely good, Babette."

"I am so happy," she whispered.

"Earth can bestow no more on me," repeated Rudy. And the evening bells rang from the hills of Savoy and the mountains of Switzerland. In golden splendor stood forth toward the west the dark-blue Jura.

"God grant you all that is brightest and best!" exclaimed Babette fervently.

"He will," said Rudy; "to-morrow will fulfill that wish. To-morrow you will be wholly mine — my own little charming wife."

"The boat!" cried Babette at that moment.

The boat which was to take them across again had got loose, and was drifting away from the island.

"I will bring it back," said Rudy, as he took off his coat and boots, and, springing into the lake, swam vigorously toward the boat.

Cold and deep was the clear bluish-green icy water from the glacier of the mountain. Rudy looked down into it — he took but a glance, yet he saw a gold ring trembling, glittering, and playing there. He thought of his lost betrothal ring, and the ring became larger and extended itself out into a sparkling circle, within which appeared the clear glacier; endless deep chasms yawned around it, and the water dropped tinkling like the sound of bells, and gleaming with pale-blue flames. In a

second he beheld what it will take many words to describe. Young hunters and young girls, men and women who had been lost in the crevasses of the glacier, stood there, life-like, with open eyes and smiling lips; and far beneath them arose from buried villages the church bells' chimes. Multitudes knelt under the vaulted roofs; ice-blocks formed the organ-pipes, and the mountain torrents made the music. The Ice Maiden sat on the clear transparent ground; she raised herself up toward Rudy, and kissed his feet, and there passed throughout his limbs a death-like chill, an electric shock — ice and fire: it was impossible to distinguish one from the other in the quick touch.

"Mine! mine!" sounded around him and within him. "I kissed thee when thou wert little — kissed thee on thy mouth! Now I kiss thee on thy feet; now thou art wholly mine!"

And he disappeared in the clear blue water.

All was still around. The church bells had ceased to ring; their last tones had died away along with the last streak of red on the skies above.

"Thou art mine!" resounded in the depths below. "Thou art mine!" resounded from beyond the heights — from infinity!

Happy to pass from love to love, from earth to heaven!

A string seemed to have broken — a tone of sorrow was echoed around. The ice-kiss of death had triumphed over the corruptible; the prelude to the drama of life had ended before the game itself had begun. All that seemed harsh, or sounded harshly, had subsided into harmony.

Do you call this a sad story?

Poor Babette! For her it was an hour of anguish. The boat drifted farther and farther away. No one on the mainland knew that the betrothed couple had gone over to the little island. The evening advanced, the clouds gathered, darkness came. Alone, despairing, wailing, she stood there. A furious storm came on; the lightning played over the Jura mountains, and over those of Switzerland and Savoy; from all sides flash followed upon flash, while the peals of thunder rolled in all directions for many minutes at a time. One moment the lightning was so vivid that all around became as

bright as day — every single vine stem could be seen as distinctly as at the hour of noon — and in another moment the blackest darkness enveloped all. The lightning darted in zigzags around the lake, and the roar of the thunder was echoed among the surrounding hills. On land the boats were drawn far up the beach, and all that were living had sought shelter. And now the rain poured down in torrents.

"Where can Rudy and Babette be in this awful weather?" said the Miller.

Babette sat with folded hands, with her head in her lap, exhausted by grief, by screaming, by weeping.

"In the deep water," she sobbed to herself, "far down yonder, as under a glacier, *he* lies."

She remembered what Rudy had told her about his mother's death, and of his being saved himself when taken up apparently dead from the cleft in the glacier. "The Ice Maiden has him again!"

And there came a flash of lightning as dazzling as the sun's rays on the white snow. Babette looked up. The lake rose at that moment like a shining glacier: the Ice Maiden stood there, majestic, pale, glittering, and at her feet lay Rudy's corpse.

"Mine!" she cried, and again all around was gloom, and darkness, and torrents of rain.

"Terrible!" groaned Babette. "Why should he die just when our happy day was so close at hand? Great God, enlighten my understanding — shed light upon my heart! I comprehend not Thy ways, determined by Thine almighty power and wisdom."

And God *did* shed light on her heart. A retrospective glance — a sense of grace — her dream of the preceding night — all crowded together on her mind. She remembered the words she had spoken — a wish for that which might be best for herself and Rudy.

"Woe is me! Was it the germ of sin in my heart? Was my dream a glimpse into the future, whose course had to be thus violently arrested to save me from guilt? Unhappy wretch that I am!"

She sat wailing there in the pitch-dark night. During the

deep stillness seemed to ring around her Rudy's words, — the last he had ever spoken, — "Earth can bestow no more on me!" Their sound was fraught with the fullness of joy; they were echoed amidst the depths of grief.

Some few years have elapsed since then. The lake smiles, its shores smile; the vines bear luscious grapes; steamboats with waving flags glide swiftly by; pleasure-boats with their two unfurled sails skim like white butterflies over the watery mirror; the railway beyond Chillon is open, and it goes far into the valley of the Rhone. At every station strangers issue from it — they come with their red-bound guide-books, and study therein what they ought to see. They visit Chillon, observe in the lake the little island with the three acacias, and read in the book about a bridal pair who, in the year 1856, rowed over to it one afternoon — of the bridegroom's death, and that not till the next morning were heard upon the shore the bride's despairing cries.

But the guide-book gives no account of Babette's quiet life at her father's house — not at the mill (strangers now live there), but at a pretty spot whence from her window she can often look beyond the chestnut-trees to the snowy hills over which Rudy loved to range; she can see at the hour of evening the Alpine glow — up where the children of the sun revel, and repeat their song about the wanderer whose cap the whirlwind carried off, but it could not take himself.

There is a rosy tint upon the mountain's snow — there is a rosy tint in every heart, which admits the thought, "God ordains what is best for us!" But it is not vouchsafed to us all so fully to feel this, as it was to Babette in her dream.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE THISTLE. See page 121.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE THISTLE.

AROUND the fine old mansion was a beautiful garden, full of all kinds of rare trees and flowers; the guests, on a visit to the owner of all this, expressed their delight and admiration of the wonderful garden; the people from the country round about, and from the nearest town, used to come on Sundays and holidays, and ask permission to see it; even whole schools made excursions to that place, merely for the purpose of seeing the garden.

Outside of the garden — by the fence that separated it from the meadow — stood an immense *thistle;* an uncommonly large and fine thistle, with several branches spreading out just above the root, and altogether, it was so strong and full as to make it well worthy of the name of *thistle-bush.* No one even noticed it, save the old donkey that pulled the milk-cart for the dairymaids; he stood grazing in the meadow hard by, and stretched his old neck to reach the thistle, saying, "You are beautiful! I should like to eat you!" but the tether was too short to admit of his reaching the thistle, so that he did not eat it.

There was company staying at "the Hall," — fine, aristocratic relations from town; graceful, lovely girls; and among them a young lady who had come from "foreign parts," all the way from Scotland. She was of old and noble family, and rich in gold and lands; a bride well worth the winning, thought more than one of the young men, and their mothers thought so too!

The young people were amusing themselves on the lawn, playing croquet; they flitted about among the flowers, and each of the young girls gathered one, and put it in one of the gentlemen's button-holes; but the young Scotch lady looked all about for a flower, but none of them seemed to please her, till, all at once, happening to glance over the fence, she spied

the fine large thistle-bush standing there, full of its bluish-red, healthy looking flowers. She saw it, and smiled, and begged the son of the house to get one of them for her.

"That is Scotland's flower," she said; "it grows and blossoms in our Arms; that flower give me."

And he gathered the finest of the thistle-flowers, and pricked his fingers as much in doing so, as if it had been growing on a wild rose-bush.

She took the flower, and put it in his button-hole, and he felt greatly honored thereby. Each of the other young men would gladly have given up his graceful garden flower, if he might have worn the one given by the delicate hands of the Scotch girl. The son of the house felt the honor conferred upon him to be great, but the Thistle felt it still more; it seemed to feel dew and sunshine going through it!

"It seems I am of more consequence than I thought," it said to itself; "I ought by rights to stand inside, and not outside the fence; one gets strangely placed in this world. But now I have at least one of mine over the fence; and not only there, but in a button-hole!"

To every bud that came and opened on the Thistle-bush, it told this great event; and not many days had passed before she heard — not from the people passing, nor yet from the twittering of little birds, but from the air, that treasures up and gives out sounds far and wide, — from the most shady walks of the beautiful garden, as well as from the most distant rooms at "the Hall," where doors and windows were left open — that the young man who received the thistle-flower from the graceful hands of the lovely Scottish maiden, had now got her hand and heart as well. It was a fine couple, and a "good match."

"That is *my* doing!" said the Thistle, thinking of the flower that it had given to the button-hole. And every new flower that came was told of the wonderful event.

"Surely I shall be taken up and planted in the garden now!" thought the Thistle; "perhaps, even, I shall be put in a flower-pot as a 'clincher,' — that is by far the most honorable position." And it thought of this so long, that it ended by saying to itself, with the firm conviction of that being the truth, "I shall be planted in a flower-pot!"

It promised to every little bud that came, that it also should be put in a pot, and perhaps even be promoted to a place in a button-hole, — that being the very highest one could aspire to, — but, notwithstanding, none of them got into a flower-pot, and still less into a button-hole.

They lived on light and air, and drank sunshine in the day, and dew at night; received visits from bee and hornet, who came to look for the dower, — the honey in the flower, — and they took the honey, but left the flower.

"The good-for-nothing fellows," said the Thistle-bush. "I wish I could pierce them as on a spit! but I cannot."

The flowers drooped and faded, but there always came new ones.

"You come as if you had been sent here," said the Thistle-bush to them. "I am expecting every moment to be taken over the fence."

A couple of harmless daisies, and a huge, thin plant of canary-grass, listened to this with deep respect, and believed all they heard. The old donkey — that had to pull the milk-cart — cast longing looks toward the blooming thistle, and tried to reach it, — but his tether was too short! And the Thistle-bush thought and thought, so much and so long, of the Scotch thistle, — to whom it believed itself related, — till at last it fancied that *it* had come from Scotland, and that it was its parents who had grown into the Scotch Arms.

It was a great thought, but a great thistle may well have great thoughts.

"Sometimes one is of such noble race, that one may not know it," said the Nettle, growing close by, — it had a kind of presentiment that it might be turned into muslin, if properly treated.

The summer passed, and the autumn passed; the leaves fell off the trees; the flowers came with stronger colors and less perfume; the gardener's lads sang on the other side of the fence, —

> "Up the hill, and down the hill,
> That's the way of the world still."

The young pine-trees in the wood began to feel a longing for Christmas, — but Christmas was a long way off yet!

"Here I am still," said the Thistle. "It seems that I am quite forgotten; and yet it was I who made the match! They were engaged, and now they are married, — the wedding was a week ago. I do not make a single step forward, — for I cannot."

Some weeks passed; the Thistle had its last solitary flower; large and full it was, and growing down near the root. The wind blew coldly over it, the color faded away, and all its gorgeousness disappeared, leaving only the cup of the flower, now as large as the flower of an artichoke, and glistening like a silvered sunflower.

The young couple came along the garden-path, and they were man and wife; they passed near the fence, and the bride, glancing over it, said, "Why, there stands the large thistle! it has no flowers now."

"Yes, there is still the ghost of one — of the last," said her husband, pointing to the silvery remains of the last flower, — a flower in itself.

"How beautiful it is!" she said. "We must have such a one carved in the frame of our picture."

And once more the young man had to get over the fence, to break off the silvery cup of the thistle-flower. It pricked his fingers for his pains, because he had called it a *ghost.* And then it was brought into the garden, and to "the Hall," and into the drawing-room. There stood a large picture, — the portraits of the young couple; in the bridegroom's button-hole was painted a thistle, and they talked of it, and of the flower-cup they brought in with them, — the last, now silver-shimmering thistle-flower, that was to be imitated in the carving of the frame.

And the air took all their words, and scattered them about, far and wide.

"What strange things happen to one," said the Thistle-bush. "My first-born went to live in a button-hole; my last-born in a frame! I wonder what is to become of me?"

And the old donkey, standing by the road-side, cast side-long and loving glances at the Thistle, and said, "Come to me, my sweetheart, for I cannot go to you, — my tether is too short!"

But the Thistle-bush made no answer. It grew more and more thoughtful, and it thought as far ahead as Christmas, till its budding thoughts opened into flower.

"When one's children are safely housed, a mother is quite content to remain beyond the fence, in the cold!"

"That is a most respectable thought," said the Sunshine; "and never fear but you also shall be well placed."

"In a flower-pot, or in a frame?" asked the Thistle.

"In a story," answered the Sunshine.

And here it is!

THE STORY OF THE YEAR.

IT was far in January, and a terrible fall of snow was pelting down. The snow eddied through the streets and lanes; the window-panes seemed plastered with snow on the outside; snow plumped down in masses from the roofs: and a sudden hurry had seized on the people, for they ran, and jostled, and fell into each other's arms, and as they clutched each other fast for a moment, they felt that they were safe at least for that length of time. Coaches and horses seemed frosted with sugar. The footmen stood with their backs against the carriages, so as to turn their faces from the wind. The foot passengers kept in the shelter of the carriages, which could only move slowly on in the deep snow; and when the storm at last abated, and a narrow path was swept clean alongside the houses, the people stood still in this path when they met, for none liked to take the first step aside into the deep snow to let the other pass him. Thus they stood silent and motionless, till, as if by tacit consent, each sacrificed one leg, and stepping aside, buried it in the deep snow-heap.

Towards evening it grew calm. The sky looked as if it had been swept, and had become more lofty and transparent. The stars looked as if they were quite new, and some of them were amazingly bright and pure. It froze so hard that the snow creaked, and the upper rind of snow might well have grown hard enough to bear the Sparrows in the morning dawn. These little birds hopped up and down where the sweeping had been done; but they found very little food, and were not a little cold.

"Piep!" said one of them to another; "they call this a new year, and it is worse than the last! We might just as well have kept the old one. I'm dissatisfied, and I've a right to be so."

"Yes; and the people ran about and fired off shots to cel-

ebrate the New Year," said a shivering little Sparrow; "and they threw pans and pots against the doors, and were quite boisterous with joy because the Old Year was gone. I was glad of it too, because I hoped we should have had warm days; but that has come to nothing — it freezes much harder than before. People have made a mistake in reckoning the time!"

"That they have!" a third put in, who was old, and had a white poll: "they've something they call the calendar — it's an invention of their own — and everything is to be arranged according to that; but it won't do. When spring comes, then the year begins, and I reckon according to that."

"But when will spring come?" the others inquired.

"It will come when the stork comes back. But his movements are very uncertain, and here in town no one knows anything about it: in the country they are better informed. Shall we fly out there and wait? There, at any rate, we shall be nearer to spring."

"Yes, that may be all very well," observed one of the Sparrows, who had been hopping about for a long time, chirping, without saying anything decided. "I've found a few comforts here in town, which I am afraid I should miss out in the country. Near this neighborhood, in a court-yard, there lives a family of people, who have taken the very sensible notion of placing three or four flower-pots against the wall, with their mouths all turned inward, and the bottom of each pointing outward. In each flower-pot a hole has been cut, big enough for me to fly in and out at. I and my husband have built a nest in one of those pots, and have brought up our young family there. The family of people of course made the whole arrangement that they might have the pleasure of seeing us, or else they would not have done it. To please themselves they also strew crumbs of bread; and so we have food, and are in a manner provided for. So I think my husband and I will stay where we are, although we are very dissatisfied — but we shall stay."

"And we will fly into the country to see if spring is not coming!"

And away they flew.

Out in the country it was hard winter, and the glass was a few degrees lower than in the town. The sharp winds swept across the snow-covered fields. The farmer, muffled in warm mittens, sat in his sledge, and beat his arms across his breast to warm himself, and the whip lay across his knees. The horses ran till they smoked again. The snow creaked, and the Sparrows hopped about in the ruts, and shivered, "Piep! when will spring come? it is very long in coming!"

"Very long," sounded from the next snow-covered hill, far over the field. It might be the echo which was heard; or perhaps the words were spoken by yonder wonderful old man, who sat in wind and weather high on the heap of snow. He was quite white, attired like a peasant in a coarse white coat of frieze; he had long white hair, and was quite pale, with big blue eyes.

"Who is that old man yonder?" asked the Sparrows.

"I know who he is," quoth an old Raven, who sat on the fence-rail, and was condescending enough to acknowledge that we are all like little birds in the sight of Heaven, and therefore was not above speaking to the Sparrows, and giving them information. "I know who the old man is. It is Winter, the old man of last year. He is not dead, as the calendar says, but is guardian to little Prince Spring, who is to come. Yes, Winter bears sway here. Ugh! the cold makes you shiver, does it not, you little ones?"

"Yes. Did I not tell the truth?" said the smallest Sparrow: "the calendar is only an invention of man, and is not arranged according to nature! They ought to leave these things to us, who are born cleverer than they."

And one week passed away, and two passed away. The frozen lake lay hard and stiff, looking like a sheet of lead, and damp icy mists lay brooding over the land; the great black crows flew about in long rows, but silently; and it seemed as if nature slept. Then a sunbeam glided along over the lake, and made it shine like burnished tin. The snowy covering on the field and on the hill did not glitter as it had done; but the white form, Winter himself, still sat there, his gaze fixed unswervingly upon the south. He did not notice that the snowy carpet seemed to sink as it were into the earth,

and that here and there a little grass-green patch appeared, and that all these patches were crowded with Sparrows which cried, "Kee-wit! kee-wit! Is spring coming now?"

"Spring!" The cry resounded over field and meadow, and through the black-brown woods, where the moss still glimmered in bright green upon the tree trunks; and from the south the first two storks came flying through the air. On the back of each sat a pretty little child — one was a girl and the other a boy. They greeted the earth with a kiss, and wherever they set their feet, white flowers grew up from beneath the snow. Then they went hand in hand to the old ice man, Winter, clung to his breast embracing him, and in a moment they and he, and all the region around were hidden in a thick damp mist, dark and heavy, that closed over all like a veil. Gradually the wind rose, and now it rushed roaring along, and drove away the mist with heavy blows, so that the sun shone warmly forth, and Winter himself vanished, and the beautiful children of Spring sat on the throne of the year.

"That 's what I call spring," cried each of the Sparrows. "Now we shall get our rights, and have amends for the stern winter."

Wherever the two children turned, green buds burst forth on bushes and trees, the grass shot upward, and the corn-fields turned green and became more and more lovely. And the little maiden strewed flowers all around. Her apron, which she held up before her, was always full of them; they seemed to spring up there, for her lap continued full, however zealously she strewed the blossoms around; and in her eagerness she scattered a snow of blossoms over apple-trees and peach-trees, so that they stood in full beauty before their green leaves had fairly come forth.

And she clapped her hands, and the boy clapped his, and then flocks of birds came flying up, nobody knew whence, and they all twittered and sang, "Spring has come."

That was beautiful to behold. Many an old granny crept forth over the threshold into the sunshine, and tripped gleefully about, casting a glance at the yellow flowers which shone everywhere in the fields, just as they used to do when she was

young. The world grew young again to her, and she said, "It is a blessed day out here to-day!"

The forest still wore its brown-green dress, made of buds; but the thyme was already there, fresh and fragrant; there were violets in plenty, anemones and primroses came forth, and there was sap and strength in every blade of grass. That was certainly a beautiful carpet on which no one could resist sitting down, and there accordingly the young spring pair sat hand in hand, and sang and smiled, and grew on.

A mild rain fell down upon them from the sky, but they did not notice it, for the rain-drops were mingled with their own tears of joy. They kissed each other, and were betrothed as people that should marry, and in the same moment the verdure of the woods was unfolded, and when the sun rose, the forest stood there arrayed in green.

And hand in hand the betrothed pair wandered under the pendent ocean of fresh leaves, where the rays of the sun gleamed through the interstices in lovely, ever-changing hues. What virgin purity, what refreshing balm in the delicate leaves! The brooks and streams rippled clearly and merrily among the green velvety rushes and over the colored pebbles. All nature seemed to say, "There is plenty, and there shall be plenty always!" And the cuckoo sang and the lark caroled: it was a charming spring; but the willows had woolly gloves over their blossoms: they were desperately careful, and that is wearisome.

And days went by and weeks went by, and the heat came as it were whirling down. Hot waves of air came through the corn, that became yellower and yellower. The white water-lily of the North spread its great green leaves over the glassy mirror of the woodland lakes, and the fishes sought out the shady spots beneath; and at the sheltered side of the wood, where the sun shone down upon the walls of the farm-house, warming the blooming roses, and the cherry-trees, which hung full of juicy black berries, almost hot with the fierce beams, there sat the lovely wife of Summer, the same being whom we have seen as a child and as a bride; and her glance was fixed upon the black gathering clouds, which in wavy outlines — blue-black and heavy — were piling them-

selves up, like mountains, higher and higher. They came from three sides, and growing like a petrified sea, they came swooping toward the forest, where every sound had been silenced as if by magic. Every breath of air was hushed, every bird was mute. There was a seriousness — a suspense throughout all nature; but in the highways and lanes, foot passengers, and riders, and men in carriages were hurrying on to get under shelter. Then suddenly there was a flashing of light, as if the sun were burst forth — flaming, burning, all-devouring! And the darkness returned amid a rolling crash. The rain poured down in streams, and there was alternate darkness and blinding light; alternate silence and deafening clamor. The young, brown, feathery reeds on the moor moved to and fro in long waves; the twigs of the woods were hidden in a mist of waters, and still came darkness and light, and still silence and roaring followed one another; the grass and corn lay beaten down and swamped, looking as though they could never raise themselves again. But soon the rain fell only in gentle drops, the sun peered through the clouds, the water-drops glittered like pearls on the leaves, the birds sang, the fishes leaped up from the surface of the lake, the gnats danced in the sunshine, and yonder on the rock, in the salt heaving sea-water, sat Summer himself — a strong man with sturdy limbs and long dripping hair — there he sat, strengthened by the cool bath, in the warm sunshine. All nature round about was renewed, everything stood luxuriant, strong and beautiful; it was summer, warm, lovely summer.

And pleasant and sweet was the fragrance that streamed upward from the rich clover-field, where the bees swarmed round the old ruined place of meeting: the bramble wound itself around the altar stone, which, washed by the rain, glittered in the sunshine; and thither flew the Queen-bee with her swarm, and prepared wax and honey. Only Summer saw it, he and his strong wife; for them the altar table stood covered with the offerings of nature.

And the evening sky shone like gold, shone as no church dome can shine; and in the interval between the evening and the morning red there was moonlight: it was summer.

And days went by, and weeks went by. The bright scythes

of the reapers gleamed in the corn-fields; the branches of the apple-trees bent down, heavy with red-and-yellow fruit. The hops smelt sweetly, hanging in large clusters; and under the hazel bushes where hung great bunches of nuts, rested a man and woman — Summer and his quiet consort.

"What wealth!" exclaimed the woman: "all around a blessing is diffused, everywhere the scene looks homelike and good; and yet — I know not why — I long for peace and rest — I know not how to express it. Now they are already ploughing again in the field. The people want to gain more and more. See, the storks flock together, and follow at a little distance behind the plough — the bird of Egypt that carried us through the air. Do you remember how we came as children to this land of the North? We brought with us flowers, and pleasant sunshine, and green to the woods; the wind has treated them roughly, and they have become dark and brown like the trees of the South, but they do not, like them, bear fruit."

"Do you wish to see the golden fruit?" said Summer: "then rejoice."

And he lifted his arm, and the leaves of the forest put on hues of red and gold, and beauteous tints spread over all the woodland. The rose-bush gleamed with scarlet hips; the elder branches hung down with great heavy bunches of dark berries; the wild chestnuts fell ripe from their dark husks; and in the depths of the forests the violets bloomed for the second time.

But the Queen of the Year became more and more silent, and paler and paler.

"It blows cold," she said, "and night brings damp mists. I long for the land of my childhood."

And she saw the storks fly away, one and all; and she stretched forth her hands toward them. She looked up at the nests, which stood empty. In one of them the long-stalked cornflower was growing; in another, the yellow mustard-seed, as if the nest were only there for its protection; and the Sparrows were flying up into the storks' nests.

"Piep! where has the master gone? I suppose he can't bear it when the wind blows, and that therefore he has left the country. I wish him a pleasant journey!"

The forest leaves became more and more yellow, leaf fell down upon leaf, and the stormy winds of autumn howled. The year was now far advanced, and the Queen of the Year reclined upon the fallen yellow leaves, and looked with mild eyes at the gleaming star, and her husband stood by her. A gust swept through the leaves, which fell again in a shower, and the Queen was gone, but a butterfly, the last of the season, flew through the cold air.

The wet fogs came, an icy wind blew, and the long dark nights drew on apace. The Ruler of the Year stood there with locks white as snow, but he knew not it was his hair that gleamed so white — he thought snow-flakes were falling from the clouds; and soon a thin covering of snow was spread over the fields.

And then the church bells rang for the Christmas-time.

"The bells ring for the new-born," said the Ruler of the Year. "Soon the new King and Queen will be born; and I shall go to rest, as my wife has done — to rest in the gleaming star."

And in the fresh green fir wood, where the snow lay, stood the Angel of Christmas, and consecrated the young trees that were to adorn his feast.

"May there be joy in the room and under the green boughs," said the Ruler of the Year. In a few weeks he had become a very old man, white as snow. "My time for rest draws near, and the young pair of the year shall now receive my crown and sceptre.

"But the might is still thine," said the Angel of Christmas; "the might and not the rest. Let the snow lie warmly upon the young seed. Learn to bear it, that another receives homage while thou yet reignest. Learn to bear being forgotten while thou art yet alive. The hour of thy release will come when spring appears."

"And when will spring come?" asked Winter.

"It will come when the stork returns."

And with white locks and snowy beard, cold, bent, and hoary, but strong as the wintry storm and firm as ice, old Winter sat on the snowy drift on the hill, looking toward the south, where he had before sat and gazed. The ice cracked,

the snow creaked, the skaters skimmed to and fro on the smooth lakes, ravens and crows contrasted picturesquely with the white ground, and not a breath of wind stirred. And in the quiet air old Winter clinched his fists, and the ice was fathoms thick between land and land.

Then the Sparrows came again out of the town, and asked, "Who is that old man yonder?"

And the Raven sat there again, or a son of his, which comes to quite the same thing, and answered them and said, "It is Winter, the old man of last year. He is not dead, as the almanac says, but he is the guardian of Spring, who is coming."

"When will spring come?" asked the Sparrows. "Then we shall have good times and a better rule. The old one was worth nothing."

And Winter nodded in quiet thought at the leafless forest, where every tree showed the graceful form and bend of its twigs; and during the winter sleep the icy mists of the clouds came down, and the ruler dreamed of his youthful days, and of the time of his manhood; and toward the morning dawn the whole wood was clothed in glittering hoar-frost. That was the summer dream of Winter, and the sun scattered the hoar frost from the boughs.

"When will spring come?" asked the Sparrows.

"The spring!" sounded like an echo from the hills on which the snow lay. The sun shone warmer, the snow melted, and the birds twittered, "Spring is coming!"

And aloft through the air came the first stork, and the second followed him. A lovely child sat on the back of each, and they alighted on the field, kissed the earth, and kissed the old silent man, and he disappeared, shrouded in the cloudy mist. And the story of the year was done.

"That is all very well," said the Sparrows; "it is very beautiful too, but it is not according to the almanac, and therefore it is irregular."

THE LOVELIEST ROSE IN THE WORLD.

ONCE there reigned a Queen, in whose garden were found the most glorious flowers at all seasons and from all the lands in the world; but especially she loved roses, and therefore she possessed the most various kinds of this flower, from the wild dog-rose, with the apple-scented green leaves, to the most splendid Provence rose. They grew against the earth walls, wound themselves round pillars and window-frames, into the passages, and all along the ceiling in all the halls. And the roses were various in fragrance, form, and color.

But care and sorrow dwelt in these halls: the Queen lay upon a sick-bed, and the doctors declared that she must die.

"There is still one thing that can serve her," said the wisest of them. "Bring her the loveliest rose in the world, the one which is the expression of the brightest and purest love; for if that is brought before her eyes ere they close, she will not die."

And young and old came from every side with roses, the loveliest that bloomed in each garden; but they were not the right sort. The flower was to be brought out of the garden of Love; but what rose was it there that expressed the highest and purest love?

And the poets sang of the loveliest rose in the world, and each one named his own; and intelligence was sent far round the land to every heart that beat with love, to every class and condition, and to every age.

"No one has till now named the flower," said the wise man. "No one has pointed out the place where it bloomed in its splendor. They are not the roses from the coffin of Romeo and Juliet, or from the Walburg's grave, though these roses will be ever fragrant in song. They are not the roses that sprouted forth from Winkelried's blood-stained lances, from the blood that flows in a sacred cause from the breast of the

hero who dies for his country; though no death is sweeter than this, and no rose redder than the blood that flows then. Nor is it that wondrous flower, to cherish which man devotes, in a quiet chamber, many a sleepless night, and much of his fresh life — the magic flower of science."

"I know where it blooms," said a happy mother, who came with her pretty child to the bed-side of the Queen. "I know where the loveliest rose of the world is found! The rose that is the expression of the highest and purest love springs from the blooming cheeks of my sweet child when, strengthened by sleep, it opens its eyes and smiles at me with all its affection!"

"Lovely is this rose; but there is still a lovelier," said the wise man.

"Yes, a far lovelier one," said one of the women. "I have seen it, and a loftier, purer rose does not bloom. I saw it on the cheeks of the Queen. She had taken off her golden crown, and in the long dreary night she was carrying her sick child in her arms: she wept, kissed it, and prayed for her child as a mother prays in the hour of her anguish."

"Holy and wonderful in its might is the white rose of grief; but it is not the one we seek."

"No, the loveliest rose of the world I saw at the altar of the Lord," said the good old Bishop. I saw it shine as if an angel's face had appeared. The young maidens went to the Lord's Table, and renewed the promise made at their baptism, and roses were blushing, and pale roses shining on their fresh cheeks. A young girl stood there; she looked with all the purity and love of her young spirit up to heaven: that was the expression of the highest and the purest love."

"May she be blessed!" said the wise man; "but not one of you has yet named to me the loveliest rose of the world."

Then there came into the room a child, the Queen's little son. Tears stood in his eyes and glistened on his cheeks: he carried a great open book, and the binding was of velvet, with great silver clasps.

"Mother!" cried the boy, "only hear what I have read."

And the child sat by the bed-side, and read from the book of Him who suffered death on the cross to save men, and even those who were not yet born.

"Greater love there is not" —

And a roseate hue spread over the cheeks of the Queen, and her eyes gleamed, for she saw that from the leaves of the book there bloomed the loveliest rose, that sprang from the blood of Christ shed on the cross.

"I see it!" she said: "he who beholds this, the loveliest rose on earth, shall never die."

A PICTURE FROM THE CASTLE RAMPARTS.

IT is autumn; we stand on the Castle Ramparts and look out across the sea with its many ships to the Swedish coast rising beyond, bright in the evening sunshine. Behind us the rampart descends abruptly; magnificent trees, whose yellow leaves are falling fast, grow below, and behind them are certain close-built, dull-looking houses with wooden palisades; a dreary walk has the sentinel who paces to and fro among them, but still drearier and darker must it be within those grated windows, for there dwell convict slaves, the worst of criminals.

A beam from the setting sun strays into the bare chamber, for the sun shines alike on the evil and on the good. The sullen, savage felon gazes gloomily on the cold sunbeam. A little bird flies upon the grating; his song, too, is for the evil as for the good. "Quirrevit!" his song is a brief one, but he remains perched on the grating; he flaps his wings, plumes his feathers, one tiny feather falls off, the others he ruffles up round his neck. And the chained criminal looks on, and a softer expression passes over his hard, coarse features, a feeling he is scarcely conscious of springs up within his heart, a feeling in some way akin to the sunbeam that has darted through the trellis, and the fragrance of the violets that in the spring cluster so abundantly outside his prison. But now sounds the horn of some home-bound huntsman; clear, strong, and lively are the notes. Away from the grating flies the bird, from the bare wall fades away the sunbeam, and all is dark again within the chamber, dark again in the convict's heart. But, thank Heaven! the sun has shone therein, the bird's song has been heard, though but for one minute.

Die not away so soon, ye sweet, clear tones from the huntsman's horn! The evening is mild, the sea calm and smooth as a mirror.

THE ELDER TREE MOTHER.

THERE was once a little boy who had caught cold; he had gone out and got wet feet; no one could imagine how it had happened, for it was quite dry weather. Now his mother undressed him, put him to bed, and had the tea-urn brought in to make him a good cup of elder tea, for that warms well. At the same time there also came in at the door the friendly old man who lived all alone at the top of the house, and was very solitary. He had neither wife nor children, but he was very fond of little children, and knew so many stories that it was quite delightful.

"Now you are to drink your tea," said the mother, "and then perhaps you will hear a story."

"Ah! if one only could tell a new one!" said the old man, with a friendly nod. "But where did the little man get his wet feet?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the mother, "no one can tell how that came about."

"Shall I have a story?" asked the boy.

"Yes, if you can tell me at all accurately — for I must know that first — how deep the gutter is in the little street through which you go to school."

"Just half way up to my knee," answered the boy, "that is, if I put my feet in the deep hole."

"You see, that's how we get our feet wet," said the old gentleman. "Now I ought certainly to tell you a story; but I don't know any more."

"You can make up one directly," answered the little boy. "Mother says that everything you look at can be turned into a story, and that you can make a tale of everything you touch."

"Yes, but those stories and tales are worth nothing! No, the real ones come of themselves. They knock at my forehead and say, 'Here I am!'"

"Will there soon be a knock?" asked the little boy, and the mother laughed, and put elder tea in the pot, and poured hot water upon it.

"A story! a story!"

"Yes if a story would come of itself; but that kind of thing is very grand; it only comes when it 's in the humor. Wait!" he cried all at once; "here we have it. Look you; there's one in the tea-pot now."

And the little boy looked across at the tea-pot. The lid raised itself more and more, and the elder flowers came forth from it, white and fresh; they shot forth long fresh branches even out of the spout, they spread abroad in all directions, and became larger and larger; there was the most glorious elder bush — in fact, quite a great tree. It penetrated even to the bed, and thrust the curtains aside; how fragrant it was, and how it bloomed! And in the midst of the tree sat an old, pleasant-looking woman in a strange dress. It was quite green, like the leaves of the elder-tree, and bordered with great white elder blossoms; one could not at once discern whether this border was of stuff or of living green and real flowers.

"What is the woman's name?" the little boy asked.

"The Romans and Greeks," replied the old man, "used to call her a Dryad; but we don't understand that: out in the sailors' suburb we have a better name for her; there she 's called Elder Tree Mother, and it is to her you must pay attention: only listen, and look at that glorious elder-tree.

"Just such a great blooming tree stands outside; it grew there in the corner of a poor little yard, and under this tree two old people sat one afternoon in the brightest sunshine. It was an old, old sailor, and his old, old wife; they had great grandchildren, and were soon to celebrate their golden wedding;[1] but they could not quite make out the date, and the Elder Tree Mother sat in the tree and looked pleased, just as she does here. 'I know very well when the golden wedding is to be,' said she; but they did not hear it — they were talking of old times.

[1] The golden wedding is celebrated in several countries of the Continent, by the wedded pairs who survive to see the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage-day.

"'Yes, do you remember,' said the old seaman, 'when we were quite little, and ran about and played together! it was in the very same yard where we are sitting now, and we planted little twigs in the yard, and made a garden."

"'Yes,' replied the old woman, 'I remember it very well: we watered the twigs, and one of them was an elder twig; that struck root, shot out other green twigs, and has become a great tree, under which we old people sit.'

"'Surely,' said he; 'and yonder in the corner stood a butt of water; there I swam my boat; I had cut it out myself. How it could sail! But I certainly soon had to sail elsewhere myself.'

"'But first we went to school and learned something,' said she, 'and then we were confirmed; we both cried, but in the afternoon we went hand in hand to the round tower, and looked out into the wide world, over Copenhagen and across the water; then we went out to Fredericksberg, where the the King and Queen were sailing in their splendid boats upon the canals.'

"'But I was obliged to sail elsewhere, and that for many years, far away on long voyages.'

"'Yes, I often cried about you,' she said. 'I thought you were dead and gone, and lying down in the deep waters, rocked by the waves. Many a night I got up to look if the weathercock was turning. Yes, it turned indeed; but you did not come. I remember so clearly how the rain streamed down from the sky. The man with the cart who fetched away the dust came to the place where I was in service. I went down with him to the dust-bin, and remained standing in the doorway. What wretched weather it was! And just as I stood there the postman came up and gave me a letter. It was from you! How that letter had travelled about! I tore it open and read; I laughed and wept at once, I was so glad. There it stood written that you were in the warm countries where the coffee-beans grow. You told me so much, and I read it all the while the rain was streaming down, and I stood by the dustbin. Then somebody came and clasped me around the waist.'

"'And you gave him a terrible box on the ear — one that sounded?'

"'I did not know that it was you. You had arrived just as quickly as your letter. And you were so handsome; but that you are still. You had a large yellow silk handkerchief in your pocket, and a hat on your head. You were so handsome! And, gracious! what weather it was, and how the street looked!'

"'Then we were married,' said he; 'do you remember? And then when our first little boy came, and then Marie, and Neils, and Peter, and Jack, and Christian?'

"'Yes, and how all these have grown up to be respectable people, and every one likes them.'

"'And their children have had little ones in their turn,' said the old sailor. 'Yes, those are children's children! They're of the right sort. It was, if I don't mistake, at this very season of the year that we were married?'

"'Yes; this is the day of your golden wedding,' said the Elder Tree Mother, putting out her head just between the two old people; and they thought it was a neighbor nodding to them, and they looked at each other, and took hold of one another's hands.

"Soon afterwards came their children and grandchildren; these knew very well that it was the golden wedding-day; they had already brought their congratulations in the morning, but the old people had forgotten it, while they remembered everything right well that had happened years and years ago.

"And the elder-tree smelt so sweet, and the sun that was now setting shone just in the faces of the old couple, so that their cheeks looked quite red; and the youngest of their grandchildren danced about them, and cried out quite gleefully that there was to be a feast this evening, for they were to have hot potatoes; and the Elder Mother nodded in the tree, and called out 'Hurra!' with all the rest."

"But that was not a story," said the little boy who had heard it told.

"Yes, so you understand it," replied the old man; "but let us ask the Elder Mother about it."

"That was not a story," said the Elder mother; "but now it comes; but of truth the strangest stories are formed, other-

wise my beautiful elder-tree could not have sprouted forth out of the tea-pot."

And then she took the little boy out of bed, and laid him upon her bosom, and the blossoming elder branches wound round them, so that they sat as it were in the thickest arbor, and this arbor flew away with them through the air. It was indescribably beautiful. Elder Mother all at once became a pretty young girl; but her dress was still of the green stuff with the white blossoms that Elder Mother had worn; in her bosom she had a real elder blossom, and on her head a wreath of elder flowers; her eyes were so large and blue, they were beautiful to look at! She and the boy were of the same age, and they kissed each other and felt similar joys.

Hand in hand they went forth out of the arbor, and now they stood in the beauteous flower garden of home. The father's staff was tied up near the fresh grass-plot, and for the little boy there was life in that staff. As soon as they seated themselves upon it, the polished head turned into a noble neighing horse's head, with a flowing mane, and four slender legs shot forth; the creature was strong and spirited, and they rode at a gallop round the grass-plot — hurra!

"Now we're going to ride many miles away," said the boy; "we'll ride to the nobleman's estate, where we went last year!"

And they rode round and round the grass-plot, and the little girl, who, as we know, was no one else but Elder Mother, kept crying out, —

"Now we're in the country! Do you see the farm-house, with the great baking oven standing out of the wall like an enormous egg by the way-side? The elder-tree spread its branches over it, and the cock walks about, scratching for his hens; look how he struts! Now we are near the church; it lies high up on the hill, under the great oak-trees, one of which is half dead. Now we are at the forge, where the fire burns and the half clad men beat with their hammers, so that the sparks fly far around. Away, away to the nobleman's splendid seat!"

And everything that the little maiden mentioned, as she sat on the stick behind him, flew past them, and the little boy saw

it all, though they were only riding round and round the grass-plot. Then they played in the side walk, and scratched up the earth to make a little garden; and she took elder flowers out of her hair and planted them, and they grew just like those that the old people had planted when they were little, as has been already told. They went hand in hand just as the old people had done in their childhood; but not to the high tower, or to the Fredricksberg Garden. No, the little girl took hold of the boy round the body, and then they flew far away out into the country.

And it was spring, and summer came, and autumn, and winter, and thousands of pictures were mirrored in the boy's eyes and heart, and the little maiden was always singing to him.

He will never forget that; and throughout their whole journey the elder-tree smelt so sweet, so fragrant: he noticed the roses and the fresh beech-trees; but the elder-tree smelt stronger than all, for its flowers hung round the little girl's heart, and he often leaned against them as they flew onward.

"Here it is beautiful in spring!" said the little girl.

And they stood in the green beech wood, where the thyme lay spread in fragrance at their feet, and the pale pink anemones looked glorious among the vivid green.

"O, that it were always spring in the merry green wood!"

"Here it is beautiful in summer!" said she.

And they passed by old castles of knightly days, — castles whose high walls and pointed turrets were mirrored in the canals, where swans swam about, and looked down the old shady avenues. In the fields the corn waved like a sea, in the ditches yellow and red flowers were growing, and in the hedges wild hops and blooming convolvulus. In the evening the moon rose round and large, and the haystacks in the meadows smelt sweet.

"Here it is beautiful in autumn!" said the little girl.

And the sky seemed twice as lofty and twice as blue as before, and the forests were decked in the most gorgeous tints of red, yellow, and green. The hunting dogs raced about; whole flocks of wild ducks flew screaming over the Huns' Graves, on which bramble bushes twined over the old stones.

The sea was dark blue, and covered with ships with white sails; and in the barns sat old women, girls, and children, picking hops into a large tub: the young people sang songs, and the older ones told tales of magicians and goblins. It could not be finer anywhere.

"Here it is beautiful in winter!" said the little girl.

And all the trees were covered with hoar-frost, so that they looked like white trees of coral. The snow crumbled beneath one's feet, as if every one had new boots on; and one shooting star after another fell from the sky. In the room the Christmas tree was lighted up, and there were presents, and there was happiness. In the country people's farm-houses the violin sounded, and there were merry games for apples; and even the poorest child said, "It is beautiful in winter!"

Yes, it was beautiful; and the little girl showed the boy everything; and still the blossoming tree smelt sweet, and still waved the red flag with the white cross, the flag under which the old seaman had sailed. The boy became a youth, and was to go out into the wide world, far away to the hot countries where the coffee grows. But when they were to part, the little girl took an elder blossom from her breast, and gave it to him to keep. It was laid in his hymn-book, and in the foreign land, when he opened the book, it was always at the place where the flower of Remembrance lay; and the more he looked at the flower the fresher it became, so that he seemed, as it were, to breathe the forest air of home; then he plainly saw the little girl looking out with her clear blue eyes from between the petals of the flower, and then she whispered, "Here it is beautiful in spring, summer, autumn, and winter!" and hundreds of pictures glided through his thoughts.

Thus many years went by, and now he was an old man, and sat with his old wife under the blossoming elder-tree: they were holding each other by the hand, just as the great grandmother and great grandfather had done outside; and, like these, they spoke of old times and of the golden wedding. The little maiden with the blue eyes and with the elder blossoms in her hair sat up in the tree, and nodded to both of them, and said, "To-day is our golden wedding-day!" and then

she took two flowers out of her hair and kissed them, and they gleamed first like silver and then like gold, and when she laid them on the heads of the old people each changed into a golden crown. There they both sat, like a King and a Queen, under the fragrant tree which looked quite like an elder bush; and he told his old wife the story of the Elder Tree Mother, as it had been told to him when he was quite a little boy, and they both thought that the story in many points resembled their own, and those parts they liked the best.

"Yes, thus it is!" said the little girl in the tree. "Some call me Elder Tree Mother, others the Dryad, but my real name is Remembrance: it is I who sit in the tree that grows on and on, and I can think back and tell stories. Let me see if you have still your flower."

And the old man opened his hymn-book; there lay the elder blossom as fresh as if it had only just been placed there; and Remembrance nodded, and the two old people with the golden crowns on their heads sat in the red evening sunlight, and they closed their eyes, and — and — the story was finished.

The little boy lay in his bed and did not know whether he had been dreaming or had heard a tale told; the tea-pot stood on the table, but no elder bush was growing out of it, and the old man who had told about it was just going out of the door, and indeed he went.

"How beautiful that was!" said the little boy. "Mother, I have been in the hot countries."

"Yes, I can imagine that!" replied his mother. "When one drinks two cups of hot elder tea one very often gets into the hot countries!" And she covered him up well, that he might not take cold. "You have slept well while I disputed with him as to whether it was a story or a fairy tale."

"And where is the Elder Tree Mother?" asked the little lad.

"She 's in the tea-pot," replied his mother; "and there she may stay."

A VISION OF THE LAST DAY.

OF all the days of our life the greatest and most solemn is the day on which we die. Hast thou ever tried to realize that most sure, most portentous hour, the last hour we shall spend on earth?

There was a certain man, an upholder of truth and justice, a Christian man and orthodox, so the world esteemed him. And, in sooth, it may be that some good thing was found in him, since in sleep, amid the visions of the night, it pleased the Father of spirits to reveal him to himself, making manifest to him what he was in truth, namely, one of those who trust in themselves that they are righteous and despise others.

He went to rest, secure that his accounts were right with all men, that he had paid his dues and wrought good works that day; of the secret pride of his heart, of the harsh words that had passed his lips, he took no account at all. And so he slept, and in his sleep Death stood by his bedside, a glorious Angel, strong, spotless, beautiful, but unlike every other angel, stern, unsmiling, pitiless of aspect.

"Thine hour is come, and thou must follow me!" spake Death. And Death's cold finger touched the man's feet, whereupon they became like ice, then touched his forehead, then his heart. And the chain that bound the immortal soul to clay was riven asunder, and the soul was free to follow the Angel of Death.

But during those brief seconds, while yet that awful touch thrilled through feet, and head, and heart, there passed over the dying man, as in great, heaving, ocean-waves, the recollection of all that he had wrought and felt in his whole life; just as one shuddering glance into a whirlpool suffices to reveal in thought rapid as lightning, the entire unfathomable depth; just as in one momentary glance at the starry heavens

we can conceive the infinite multitude of that glorious host of unknown orbs.

In such a retrospect the terrified sinner shrinks back into himself, and finding there no stay by which to cling, must feel shrinking into infinite nothingness ; while the devout soul raises its thoughts to the Almighty, yielding itself up to Him in child-like trust, and praying, " Thy will be done in me ! "

But this man had not the child-like mind, neither did he tremble like the sinner ; his thoughts were still the self-praising thoughts in which he had fallen asleep. His path, he believed, must lead straight heavenward, and Mercy, the promised Mercy, would open to him the gates.

And, in his dream, the Soul followed the Angel of Death, though not without first casting one wistful glance at the couch where lay, in its white shroud, the lifeless image of clay, still, as it were, bearing the impress of the soul's own individuality. And now they hovered through the air, now glided along the ground. Was it a vast, decorated hall they were passing through, or a forest ? It seemed hard to tell ; Nature, it appeared, was formally set out for show, as in the artificial old French gardens, and amid its strange, carefully arranged scenes, passed and repassed troops of men and women, all clad as for a masquerade.

" Such is human life ! " said the Angel of Death.

The figures seemed more or less disguised ; those who swept by in the glories of velvet and gold were not all among the noblest or most dignified-looking, neither were all those who wore the garb of poverty insignificant or vulgar. It was a strange masquerade ! But most strange it was to see how one and all carefully concealed under their clothing something they would not have others perceive, but in vain, for each was bent upon discovering his neighbor's secret, and they tore and snatched at one another till, now here, now there, some part of an animal was revealed. In one was found the grinning head of an ape, in another the cloven foot of a goat, in a third the poison-fang of a snake, in a fourth the clammy fin of a fish.

All had in them some token of the animal, — the animal which is fast rooted in human nature, and which here was

seen struggling to burst forth. And, however closely a man might hold his garment over it, the others would never rest till they had rent the hiding veil, and all kept crying out, "Look here! look now! here he is! there she is!" — and every one mockingly laid bare his fellow's shame.

"And what was the animal in me?" inquired the disembodied Soul; and the Angel of Death pointed to a haughty form, around whose head shone a bright, wide-spread glory of rainbow-colored rays, but at whose heart might be seen lurking, half hidden, the feet of the peacock; the glory was, in fact, merely the peacock's gaudy tail.

And as they passed on, large, foul-looking birds shrieked out from the boughs of the trees; with clear, intelligible, though harsh, human voices they shrieked, "Thou that walkest with Death, dost remember me?" All the evil thoughts and desires that had nestled within him from his birth until his death now called after him, "Rememberest thou me?"

And the Soul shuddered, recognizing the voices; it could not deny knowledge of the evil thoughts and desires that were now rising up in witness against it.

"In our flesh, in our evil nature, dwelleth no good thing," cried the Soul; "but, at least, thoughts never with me ripened into actions; the world has not seen the evil fruit." And the Soul hurried on to get free from the accusing voices; but the great black fowls swept in circles round, and screamed out their scandalous words louder and louder, as though they would be heard all over the world. And the Soul fled from them like the hunted stag, and at every step stumbled against sharp flint stones that lay in the path. "How came these sharp stones here? They look like mere withered leaves lying on the ground."

"Every stone is for some incautious word thou hast spoken, which lay as a stumbling-block in thy neighbor's path, which wounded thy neighbor's heart far more sorely and deeply than these sharp flints now wound thy feet."

"Alas! I never once thought of that," sighed the Soul.

And those words of the gospel rang through the air, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

"We have all sinned," said the Soul, recovering from its

momentary self-abasement. "I have kept the Law and the Gospel, I have done what I could, I am not as others are!"

And in his dream this man now stood at the gates of heaven, and the Angel who guarded the entrance inquired, "Who art thou? Tell me thy faith, and show it to me in thy works."

"I have faithfully kept the Commandments, I have humbled myself in the eyes of the world, I have preserved myself free from the pollution of intercourse with sinners, I have hated and persecuted evil, and those who practice it, and I would do so still, yea, with fire and sword, had I the power."

"Then thou art one of Mohammed's followers?" said the Angel.

"I? a Mohammedan? — never!"

"'He who strikes with the sword shall perish by the sword,' thus spake the Son; His religion thou knowest not. It may be that thou art one of the children of Israel, whose maxim is, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' — art thou such?"

"I am a Christian."

"I see it not in thy faith or in thine actions. The law of Christ is the law of forgiveness, love, and mercy."

"Mercy!" The gracious echo of that sweet word thrilled through infinite space, the gates of heaven opened, and the Soul hovered toward the realms of endless bliss.

But the flood of light that streamed forth from within was so dazzlingly bright, so transcendently white and pure, that the Soul shrank back as from a two-edged sword, and the hymns and harp-tones of Angels mingled in such exquisite celestial harmony as the earthly mind has not power either to conceive or to endure. And the Soul trembled and bowed itself deeper and deeper, and the heavenly light penetrated it through and through, and it felt to the quick, as it had never truly felt before, the burden of its own pride, cruelty, and sin.

"What I have done of good in the world, that did I because I could not otherwise, but the evil that I did — that was of myself!"

This confession was wrung from him; more and more the man felt dazzled and overpowered by the pure light of

heaven ; he seemed falling into a measureless abyss, the abyss of his own nakedness and unworthiness. Shrunk into himself, humbled, cast out, unripe for the kingdom of heaven, shuddering at the thought of the just and holy God, — hardly dared he to gasp out, " Mercy ! "

And the face of the Angel at the portal was turned toward him in softening pity. " Mercy is for them who implore it, not claim it ; there is Mercy also for thee. Turn thee, child of man, turn thee back the way thou camest to thy clayey tabernacle ; in pity is it given thee to dwell in dust yet a little while. Be no longer righteous in thine own eyes, copy Him who with patience endured the contradiction of sinners, strive and pray that thou mayest become poor in spirit, and so mayest thou yet inherit the Kingdom."

" Holy, loving, glorious forever shalt thou be, O, erring human spirit ! " — thus rang the chorus of Angels. And again overpowered by those transcendent melodies, dazzled and blinded by that excess of purest light, the Soul again shrank back into itself. It seemed to be falling an infinite depth ; the celestial music grew fainter and fainter, till common earthly sights and sounds dispelled the vision. The rays of the early morning sun falling full on his face, the cheerful crow of the vigilant cock, called the sleeper up to pray.

Inexpressibly humbled, yet thankful, he arose and knelt beside his bed. " Thou, who hast shown me to myself, help me now, that I may not only do justly, but love mercy, and walk humbly with my God. Thou, who hast convicted me of sin, now purify me, strengthen me, that, though ever unworthy of Thy presence, I may yet, supported by Thy Love, dare to ascend into Thine everlasting light ! "

The Vision was his ; be the lesson, the prayer, also ours.

THE GREENIES.

A ROSE-TREE stood in the window. Only a short time ago it was green and fresh, and now it looked sickly, — no doubt it was in poor health. A whole regiment was quartered on it and was eating it up ; but notwithstanding this greediness, the regiment was a very decent and respectable one. It wore bright green uniforms. I spoke to one of the "Greenies ;" he was but three days old, and yet he was already a grandfather. Do you know what he said? It is all true, — he spoke of himself and of the rest of the regiment. Listen !

"We are the most wonderful creatures in the world. We are engaged at a very early age, and immediately have the wedding. When the cold weather comes, we lay our eggs ; the little ones lie snug and warm. The wisest of creatures, the ant, (we have the grestest respect for him !) understands us. He appreciates us, you may be sure. He does not eat us up at once ; he takes our eggs, lays them in the family ant-hill, on the ground-floor, — lays them, labeled and numbered, side by side, layer on layer, so that each day a new one may creep out of the egg. Then he puts us in a stable, pinches our hind legs, and milks us till we die. He has given us the prettiest name, — 'Little milch-cow !'

"All creatures, who, like the ant, are gifted with common sense, call us so : it is only human beings who do not ; they give us another name, and that we feel to be a great affront, — great enough to embitter our whole life. Could you not write a protest against it for us? could you not rouse these human beings to a sense of the wrong they do us? They look at us so stupidly, at times with such envious eyes, just because we eat a rose-leaf, while they eat every created thing, all that is green and grows. O, they give us the most humiliating name ! I will not even mention it. Ugh ! I feel it in my stomach ; I cannot even pronounce it, — at least not when I have my uniform on, and I always wear that.

"I was born on a rose-leaf. I and the whole regiment live on the rose-tree. We live off it, in fact; but then it lives again in us, who belong to the higher order of created beings. The human beings do not like us; they come and murder us with soap-suds, — it is a horrid drink! I seem to smell it even now; it is dreadful to be washed when one was not made to be washed. Man! you who look at us with your severe soap-sud eyes, think what our place in nature is: we are born on roses, we die in roses, — our whole life is a poem. Do not give us the name which you yourself think most despicable, the name that I cannot bear to pronounce; call us the ants' milch-cows — the rose-tree regiment — the little green things."

And I — the man — stood looking at the tree, and at the little greenies, — whose name I shall not mention, for I should not like to wound the feelings of one of the citizens of the rose-tree, a large family with eggs and young ones, — and at the soap-suds that I was going to wash them in, for I had come with soap and water, and murderous intentions; but now I will use it for soap-bubbles. Look! how beautiful! perhaps there lies a fairy tale in each, and the bubble grows so large and radiant, and it looks as if there were a pearl lying inside of it!

The bubble swayed and swung, and flew to the door and then burst; but the door opened wide, and there stood Dame Fairy-tale herself! and now she will tell you better than I can about — I won't say the name — the little green things.

"Tree-lice!" said Dame Fairy-tale. "One must call things by their right names; and if one may not do so always, one must at least have the privilege of doing so in Fairy-tales!"

WHAT ONE CAN INVENT!

THERE was once a young man who wanted to become a poet. He wanted to be a poet by the next Easter, that he might marry and live by poetizing, and that, he knew, consisted merely in a knack of inventing, but then he never could invent! He was quite sure that he had been born too late; every subject had been taken before he came into the world, and there was nothing left for him to write about!

"What happy mortals were those who were born a thousand years ago," he sighed, "for then it was an easy matter to become immortal! Even those who were born but a hundred years ago were enviable; even at that time there was still something left to poetize about. But now all subjects are worn threadbare, and there is no use in my trying to write the nap on again!"

He thought and thought about it, till he grew quite thin and forlorn, poor fellow. No doctor could help him; there was but one who would be able to find the right remedy for him, and that was that wonderfully clever little old woman who lived in the little hut by the turnpike gate, that she opened and shut for all who passed that way. But she was wise and learned, and could open far more than the gate; she was much wiser than the doctor who drives in his carriage, and pays title-taxes.

"I must go to her," said the young man. Her home was small and tidy, but tiresome to look at, — not a tree, not a flower, grew anywhere near it. There was a bee-hive at the door — very useful! There was a little potato-field — very useful! and a ditch with a blackthorn bush that had flowered, and was bearing fruit — berries that draw your mouth together if you eat of them before the frost has nipped them.

"What a picture all this is of our unpoetic time," thought the young man. At least here was a thought, a grain of

gold dust that he found at the door of the little old woman's cottage.

"Write that thought down," she said. "Crumbs are bread, too. I know why you have come here; you cannot invent, and yet you want to be a poet by next Easter!"

"Everything has been written about," he sighed; "our time is not as the olden time."

"No, it is not," said the old woman. "In the olden time such as I, who knew many weighty secrets, and how to cure by the help of wonderful herbs, were burned alive; and in the olden time, the poets went about with empty stomachs and out at elbows. Ours is a very good time, the very best, much better than the olden time; but your want of invention all lies in your having no eyes to see with, and no ears to hear, and you do not say your prayers of an evening. There are any amount of things all around you that one might poetize and write about, when one knows *how* to write stories. You can find it in the earth where it grows and sprouts; you can dip into the running or the stagnant water, and you will find it there; but first of all, you must understand the way of doing it, — must know how to catch a ray of sunshine. Now, just try my spectacles, put my ear-trumpet to your ear, say your prayers, and do, for once, leave off thinking of yourself."

That last request was almost more than he could fulfill, — more than even such a wonderful old woman ought to ask.

He got the spectacles and the ear-trumpet, and was put out into the middle of the potato-field; then she gave him a huge potato in his hand; presently he seemed to hear sounds in the potato, then came a song with words, a "story of every-day life," in ten volumes, — but ten hills will do as well.

What was it the potato sang? It sang about itself and its ancestors, the arrival of the potato in Europe, and all it had had to suffer from suspicion and ill-will before its value was recognized, — before it was felt to be a much greater blessing than would be a lump of gold.

"We were distributed, by order of the King, at the court-house in every town; and there was issued a circular, setting forth our value and great merits, but no one believed it; they had not even the slightest idea how to plant us. One man

dug a hole and threw his whole bushel of potatoes into it; another stuck them into the ground, one here, another there, and then waited for them to grow, and expected them to shoot up like trees that would bear potatoes, just as apple-trees bear apples. There came buds, and stems, and flowers, and watery fruit, but it all withered away, and no one thought of the real blessing, the potato, that lay hidden under it all, in the ground. Yes, we have suffered much and been tried, — that is, our forefathers have, but it all comes right in the end. Now you know our story."

"That's enough," said the old woman; "now look at the blackthorn."

"We, too," said the blackthorn, "have many relations in the land where the potatoes came from. A party of bold Norwegians from Norway steered their course westward through storm and fog till they came to an unknown country, where, under the ice and snow, they found herbs and grass, and bushes with blue-black berries of the vine, — the blackthorn it was, whose berries ripen with the frost, and so do we. And that country they call 'Vineland,' and 'Greenland,' and 'Blackthorn Land.'"

"Why, that is quite a romantic story," said the young man.

"Now just follow me," said the little old woman, as she led him to the bee-hive. What life and movement there was! Then he looked in; there were bees standing in all the corridors, moving their wings like fans, so that there might be plenty of fresh air all through that large honey factory; that was their department. Then there were bees coming in from outside, from the sunshine and the flowers; they had been born with baskets on their legs; they brought the dust of the flowers and emptied it out of their little leg-baskets; then it was sorted and worked up into honey and wax. Some came, some went; the queen of the hive wanted to fly, but when she flies, then all the others must fly too, and the right time for that had not yet come; but fly she would, and then to prevent her doing so, they bit her majesty's wings off — so that she was obliged to stay where she was.

"Now get up on the side of the ditch, where you can see all the town-folk going past," said the little old woman.

"Goodness! what an endless number of people," said the young man. "One story after another! I seem to hear such buzzing and singing, and now it all grows quite confused! I feel quite dizzy — I shall fall!"

"No, don't," said the old woman, — "don't fall backward; just go forward, right into the crowd of people; have eyes for all you see there, ears for all you hear, and above all, have a heart in it all! and before long you will be able to *invent*, and have thoughts for writing down, — but before you go you must give me back my spectacles and my ear-trumpet," and then she took both.

"Now I see nothing more," said the young man. "I do not even hear anything."

"In that case, it is quite impossible for you to be a poet by next Easter," said the old woman.

"But *when* shall I be a poet?" asked he.

"Neither by Easter nor by Whitsuntide! You have no knack at inventing," said she.

"But how then must I do, to get my living as by poetizing?"

"That I will tell you: write about those who have written. To hit their writings is to hit them. Don't let yourself be frightened; the more you do of such writing, the more you will earn, and you and your wife will be able to eat cake every day."

"What a trick *she* has at inventing," thought the young man, when he had thanked the old woman and bidden her good-by. And he did as she had told him. Finding he could not be a poet himself, invent, and have bright ideas that people would talk of, he took to handling — and rather roughly — all those that were poets.

All this the little old woman has told me; she knows what one can invent!

"IT 'S QUITE TRUE!"

THAT is a terrible affair!" said a Hen; and she said it in a quarter of the town where the occurrence had not happened. "That is a terrible affair in the poultry-house. I cannot sleep alone to-night! It is quite fortunate that there are many of us on the roost together!" And she told a tale, at which the feathers of the other birds stood on end, and the cock's comb fell down flat. It 's quite true!

But we will begin at the beginning; and the beginning begins in a poultry-house in another part of the town. The sun went down, and the fowls jumped up on their perch to roost. There was a Hen, with white feathers and short legs, who laid her right number of eggs, and was a respectable hen in every way; as she flew up on to the roost she pecked herself with her beak, and a little feather fell out.

"There it goes!" said she; "the more I peck myself the handsomer I grow!" And she said it quite merrily, for she was a joker among the hens, though, as I have said, she was very respectable; and then she went to sleep.

It was dark all around; hen sat by hen, but the one that sat next to the merry Hen did not sleep: she heard and she didn't hear, as one should do in this world if one wishes to live in quiet; but she could not refrain from telling it to her next neighbor.

"Did you hear what was said here just now? I name no names; but here is a hen who wants to peck her feathers out to look well. If I were a cock I should despise her."

And just above the hens sat the Owl, with her husband and her little owlets; the family had sharp ears, and they all heard every word that the neighboring Hen had spoken, and they rolled their eyes, and the Mother-Owl clapped her wings and said,

"Don't listen to it! But I suppose you heard what was

said there? I heard it with my own ears, and one must hear much before one's ears fall off. There is one among the fowls who has so completely forgotten what is becoming conduct in a hen that she pulls out all her feathers, and then lets the cock see her."

"*Prenez garde aux enfants*," said the Father-Owl. "That's not fit for the children to hear."

"I'll tell it to the neighbor owl; she' a very proper owl to associate with." And she flew away.

"Hoo! hoo! to-whoo!" they both screeched in front of the neighbor's dove-cote to the doves within. "Have you heard it? Have you heard it? Hoo! hoo! there's a hen who has pulled out all her feathers for the sake of the cock. She'll die with cold, if she's not dead already."

"Coo! coo! Where, where?" cried the Pigeons.

"In the neighbor's poultry-yard. I've as good as seen it myself. It 's hardly proper to repeat the story, but it 's quite true!"

"Believe it! believe every single word of it!" cooed the Pigeons, and they cooed down into their own poultry-yard. "There's a hen, and some say that there are two of them that have plucked out all their feathers, that they may not look like the rest, and that they may attract the cock's attention. That's a bold game, for one may catch cold and die of a fever, and they are both dead."

"Wake up! wake up!" crowed the Cock, and he flew up on to the plank; his eyes were still very heavy with sleep, but yet he crowed. "Three hens have died of an unfortunate attachment to a cock. They have plucked out all their feathers. That's a terrible story. I won't keep it to myself; let it travel farther."

"Let it travel farther!" piped the Bats; and the fowls clucked and the cocks crowed, "Let it go farther! let it go farther!" And so the story travelled from poultry-yard to poultry-yard, and at last came back to the place from which it had gone forth.

"Five fowls," it was told, "have plucked out all their feathers to show which of them had become thinnest out of love to the cock; and then they have pecked each other, and fallen

down dead, to the shame and disgrace of their families, and to the great loss of the proprietor."

And the Hen who had lost the little loose feather, of course did not know her own story again; and as she was a very respectable Hen, she said, —

"I despise those fowls; but there are many of that sort. One ought not to hush up such a thing, and I shall do what I can that the story may get into the papers, and then it will be spread over all the country, and that will serve those fowls right, and their families too."

It was put into the newspaper; it was printed; and it's quite true — *that one little feather may swell till it becomes five fowls.*

ANNE LISBETH.

ANNE LISBETH had bright eyes, white teeth, and a complexion like lilies and roses; she was young, gay, pleasant to look on, light-footed, light-minded. What would come of this? Sorrow and shame would have come, had all been known, but all was not known.

Anne Lisbeth went to a grand castle, to service; she was nurse to the son of a count, a child beautiful as an angel, beloved like a prince. Clad in silk and velvet, she sat in a pleasant chamber, her nurse-child in her lap, and she loved her nurse-child dearly. But her own child, — where was he?

Of a verity, he was not beautiful, nor a credit to her any way, and he was put out to nurse in the grave-digger's cottage. There, the goodwife's temper boiled over oftener than her pot; sometimes no one was at home all day, the child cried, but what matter? he cried himself to sleep, and in sleep one feels neither hunger nor thirst. "Ill weeds grow apace," says the proverb, and Anne Lisbeth's boy shot up fast. He had taken root as it were, in the grave-digger's household, his mother had paid money for his rearing, and thought herself well rid of him. She was a fine lady in her way, and dressed handsomely whenever she went out, but she never came to see her boy, for it was a long walk to the grave-digger's, and she had other things to do. The boy ought now to earn his bread, they thought, and so he was set to mind Mads Jensen's red cow.

The watch-dog in the yard basks in the sunshine, barking at every one who passes, and in rainy weather he crouches, warm and dry, inside his kennel. Anne Lisbeth's boy sat among the graves in the sunshine, cutting sticks, or watching three strawberry plants in blossom: they would turn into berries, he hoped, and that was a pleasant thought, but the berries never ripened. Sunshine or shower, there he sat; he was

often wet to the skin — what matter? the keen wind soon dried his coarse garment, and he was best off there; in the house he got only kicks and cuffs, was called "stupid and ugly" — he was used to that.

Two words suffice to describe the lot of Anne Lisbeth's boy, only two words; *never loved.*

After a while he was fairly shoved off the land and sent to sea in a miserable little vessel. Here he sat at the helm while the captain was drinking, a frost-bitten, shabby-looking boy, and so hungry! folk declared he was never satisfied — probably he never had the chance.

It was late in the year, wet, raw, rough weather, the wind beat chillingly through the warmest clothing, especially at sea. On before the wind drove a miserable little vessel with one sail; there were two men on board, say rather one man and a half; it was the captain and his boy. There had been no light stronger than twilight all day; now it grew darker, and the cold was piercing. The skipper took a dram to warm himself; the bottle was old and the glass was a broken one with a bit of wood painted blue for a foot. The boy sat at the helm, which he held with his hard red hands — a cowed, shrinking form with wild hair; it was the grave-digger's boy, described in the church register-books as Anne Lisbeth's son.

The wind drove on and so did the ship; the sail spread out, the wind had strong hold on it. Stop! what was that? something hard pushed against the ship, it bounded, it spun round — the boy at the helm screamed aloud, "Lord Jesu, help!" The ship had struck against a great rock, and sank like an old shoe in a duck-pond; sank with all its crew, its one man and a half. None saw it save the screaming sea-gulls overhead and the fishes beneath, and these hardly saw it aright, for they darted away in terror when the water rushed into the sinking vessel.

And so these two were drowned and forgotten, drowned in water scarcely a fathom deep; only the broken glass with blue-painted wooden foot sank not, the wooden foot kept it afloat, and it drifted on to the shore. That old broken glass had been useful, had been loved too, after a fashion; so had

not been Anne Lisbeth's boy. No matter, in the kingdom of heaven shall no soul have cause to sigh "never loved."

. . . . . .

Anne Lisbeth, meanwhile, was living in a large town; she had lived there for several years, she was addressed as "madam," and always held herself very erect when she talked of old times, of the days when she drove in a carriage and held converse with countesses and baronesses. As to her nurse-child, he was the sweetest of little cherubs; he had loved her and she had loved him; he was her pride and her joy; by this time he must be fourteen years old, a clever, beautiful boy; she had not seen him since the days when she carried him in her arms; it was so long a journey to the castle.

"But I must find my way there some day," said Anne Lisbeth; "I must see my sweet young count again. He must be longing for me, loving me still as he did when his little cherub-arms clung to my neck, and his lips stammered 'Ann Lis!' as sweet as a violin. Yes, I must see him again!"

So she accomplished the long journey, partly on foot, partly by a bullock wagon. The count's castle was as splendid, the count's gardens as blooming as ever, but the servants were all strangers to her, not one of them knew Anne Lisbeth, or seemed to think her at all an important personage. "No matter," she thought, "the countess will know me, and my own boy! how I long for him!"

She had to wait a long, long time. At last, just before the company went in to dinner, Anne Lisbeth was called in. The countess spoke very kindly to her, and promised that after dinner she should see her darling boy. So she had to wait for her second summons.

"Her darling boy" had grown such a tall, straight, lanky fellow, but he still had his beautiful eyes and cherub mouth; he looked at her and said not a word. Certainly he had no recollection of her. He turned about to go, but she seized his hand, and pressed it to her lips. "O yes, that will do," he muttered hastily, and went out of the room. The ungrateful young count, whom she had loved most on earth — had made the pride of her life!

And Anne Lisbeth left the castle and took her way homeward along the open high-road in deep sadness. That he should be so cold to her, have not a word or a thought for her, — he whom she had once carried night and day, and had for years ever since carried in her heart! It was very bitter to her.

A great black raven flew down and settled on the road just in front of her, screaming hoarsely. "O, thou bird of ill omen!" she exclaimed.

She passed the grave-digger's cottage, his wife was standing in the doorway and greeted her. "How well and stout you are looking; all goes right with you, I see!"

"Pretty well," replied Anne Lisbeth.

"There has been a mischance here," said the grave-diggers' wife. "Lars, the skipper, and your boy, are both drowned. So there is an end of the matter. But I had hoped that the boy would have lived to help me at times with a penny or so; he has cost you nothing for a long while, you know, Anne Lisbeth."

"Drowned, are they?" exclaimed Anne Lisbeth; and no more was said on the subject.

Anne Lisbeth was cut to the heart because the young count would not speak to her, and because the expensive journey she had taken had brought her so little pleasure; still not for the world would she betray her disappointment to the grave-digger's wife, nor would she have it supposed that she was no longer respected at the count's. Whilst she stood talking the raven again flew screaming over her head. "The great black thing!" she exclaimed, "this is the second time it has startled me today."

She had with her some coffee-beans and some chicory; she felt tired, and it would be a kindness to the grave-digger's wife to give these to her and take a cup with her. So the poor woman went to prepare the coffee, and Anne Lisbeth sat down on a chair and fell asleep.

Strangly enough she dreamed of one whom she had never dreamt of before; she dreamed of her own child, who in that house had hungered and cried, and who now lay deep below the sea, our Lord only knew where. She dreamed that as she

sat there, waiting for her coffee, the fragrance whereof reached her from the kitchen, even as she sat there, a shining one, beautiful as the young count, stood in the doorway and he spoke to her. He said, "The world is passing away! Hold thee fast by me, thou art still my mother. Thou hast an angel in Paradise for thy child; hold fast by me." And he took hold of her, and in that very moment came a loud crash, as though the world were bursting asunder, and the angel rose in the air lifting her by her sleeves; she felt herself raised from the ground. But then something heavy dragged down her feet and pressed upon her back; it was as though a hundred women were clinging fast to her, screaming, "If thou mayst be saved, so may we! hold fast, hold fast!" And thus all clung to her, and the weight was too heavy, her sleeve was rent in twain, and Anne Lisbeth fell to the earth. In her terror she awoke. She nearly fell off the chair she sat on, her head was so dizzy. She could not understand her dream, she could not rightly remember it, but she felt it foreboded her evil.

She drank her cup of coffee, took leave of the grave-digger's wife, and walked on to the nearest village, where she was to meet the carrier, and drive home with him the same evening. But the carrier told her he could not start till the following evening; she might wait for him if she pleased. She thought over the expense of staying, considered the length of the way, and resolved to walk home; she could go by the shore, as by the road it would be two miles longer. It was bright weather and the moon was at the full, so Anne Lisbeth would walk home through the night.

The sun had set, the evening bells were still ringing,[1] nay, it was not the bells, it was Peter Oxe's frogs croaking in the pond. But soon they too were hushed, and all was silence, not a bird raised its voice, for all were at rest, and the owl, it seemed, was not at home. The stillness of death brooded over wood and shore, she could hear the sound of her own footsteps in the sand, not a wave rippled the sea, the deep waters were

[1] In Denmark the church bells still ring the sun up and ring him down, and before the chime is ended the sexton is wont to give nine distinct strokes, the first for the Lord's Prayer, the seven succeeding for the seven petitions contained therein, and the ninth for the "Amen." — *Translator.*

at peace ; silence was everywhere, silence among the living and the dead.

Anne Lisbeth walked on without thinking of anything particular, as folk say. And yet though she might not be conscious of them, her thoughts were busy within her as they always are with us all. They lie slumbering within us, both those thoughts that have already shaped themselves into action and those that have never yet stirred — there they lie, nevertheless, and some day will come forth. It is written, "The work of righteousness is peace ;" and again it is written, "The wages of sin are death!" Anne Lisbeth had read and heard these words many a time ; it might be said she had never reflected on them, but they lay low down in her heart, nevertheless.

The germs of vices and virtues both lie deep in our hearts, in thine, in mine ; like tiny, invisible seeds, there they lurk ; then comes a ray of holy light, or the touch of an evil hand, thou turnest to the right hand or to the left, and lo! the little seed-corn quivers into life, it sprouts forth, it pours its sap into all thy veins. There are many painful thoughts whereof one is unsconscious while walking in a trance, but they live and move within us all the same ; thus Anne Lisbeth walked as in a trance, but her thoughts were living within her. From Candlemas to Candlemas the heart has much — very much — upon its tablets, even the account of the whole year : many things are forgotten, sins in word and in thought, sins against our God, our neighbor, and our own conscience ; we reck not of them, neither did Anne Lisbeth. She had not transgressed the laws of the land ; she knew that she was well liked, well esteemed, even respected ; her sins she had hidden, and few knew them.

And as she now walked along the shore, what was it made her start and stand still? yonder old hat, cast up from the sea? She approached it, stood looking at it ; "It must have belonged to some poor fellow who is drowned." She walked on. Now again, what can have terrified her? for a second time she starts and pauses. Can it be yonder mass of tangle and sea-weed, clinging to a great, long-shaped stone?

It was, in sooth, nothing but a heap of sea-weed, but to her fancy it had for a moment resembled the body of a man ·

and as she walked on further, there came into her mind many things she had been told when a child about the old superstitious belief in the "Spectre of the Shore" — the ghost of the drowned body that lay unburied, washed by the waves upon the wild sea-sand. The lifeless body, that could do no harm, but the ghost, the "Spectre of the Shore," would follow the lonely wanderer, clinging fast to him, and demanding to be carried to the church-yard to be buried in consecrated earth. "Hold on! hold on!" it would cry; and as Anne Lisbeth repeated to herself these words, all at once came back to her, and that most vividly, the memory of her dream, how the mothers had clung to her, screaming, "Hold fast! cling fast!" how the world had sunk beneath her, how her sleeves had rent, and she had fallen from the hold of her child, who would fain have held her up in the hour of doom. Her child, her own flesh and blood, whom she had never loved, scarcely ever thought of — this child was now lying at the bottom of the sea; he might any day be washed ashore, and his ghost might come to her and cry, "Hold on! hold on! bury me in Christian earth!"

Goaded by this terrible thought, she speeded on faster, faster. Fear laid a cold, clammy hand upon her heart; she felt ready to faint. And as she glanced the sea, the air grew thicker and thicker, a heavy mist drew over the scene, veiling bush and tree under strange disguises. She turned to look for the moon, which was behind her; behold, it was a pale disk without rays. And something heavy seemed to clog her limbs; "Hold on! hold on!" those terrible words seemed to haunt her; she turned again to look for the moon, and its white face seemed close beside her, and the mist hung like a shroud over her shoulders. "Hold on! bury me in Christian earth!" these words she heard in her heart; and now in her ears too she heard a sound, hollow, yet hoarse, but not the voice of the frogs in the pond, not the tones of the raven — for neither of these were near — but, "Bury me, bury me!" clearly she heard those awful words. Yes, it was, it must be indeed the "Spectre of the Shore!" it was her very own child, who could not find rest for his soul till his body was borne to the church-yard and laid in a Christian grave. To the church-yard she would go, she would

dig the grave that very hour ; and as soon as she turned in the direction of the church, her burden seemed to grow lighter, nay, it disappeared altogether. When she felt this she turned back to pursue her way homeward, but then again her limbs sunk beneath her, and the terrible words again rang in her ears, "Hold on ! hold on ! bury me ! bury me ! "

Cold and clammy was the mist, but colder, more clammy had fear made her hands and face ! Shrunk into herself, with no refuge whereunto to flee, her heart heaved with thoughts and feelings that had never stirred within her until this hour.

In our northern climes one single spring night suffices to dress the beech wood in its light, bright splendor, ready to greet the sunshine of the coming day. In one second may the seed-germ of sin within us be lifted to light and unfolded into words and deeds ; likewise must it be when conscience is awakened. And our Lord awakes it at a time when we least expect, when there is no power to excuse ourselves, when the deed must stand open and naked, witnessing against us, when thoughts leap into words, and words ring clearly over the world. Then we shrink back in horror at the sight of the evil we have secretly borne within us, still more at the evil we have wantonly sown broadcast over the earth. And so was it with Anne Lisbeth. Overpowered with the sense of her sin, she sunk to the ground. "Bury me ! bury me ! " still rang those terrible words, and gladly would she have buried herself, could the grave have brought eternal forgetfulness. It was her hour of awaking with a vengeance. Her blood ran hot and cold by turns. Noiseless as the shadowy cloud in the clear moonlight passed before her a vision she had heard tell of years ago ; this was a glowing chariot of fire, drawn by four snorting horses, with fire shooting out from their eyes and nostrils, the charioteer an evil-minded nobleman, who for more than a hundred years had thus been wont to drive through the neighborhood at midnight. So ran the legend ; he was not white, like other ghosts ; his face was black as a burnt-out coal, and he nodded to Anne Lisbeth as he passed, "Hold on ! hold on ! so mayst thou again drive in a count's carriage and forget thy child ! "

She started up and hurried on toward the church-yard ; but the black crosses and the black ravens mingled confusedly

before her eyes, the ravens screamed as they had done in the morning, and now she understood them; they meant to say, "I am Mother Raven! I am Mother Raven!" and Anne Lisbeth knew that the name fitted her well; and a dread came upon her lest she should become changed into a great black bird, like these, to scream, like them, "I am Mother Raven!"

And she flung herself down on the ground, and began digging with her hands in the hard earth; she dug till the blood gushed from her fingers.

"*Bury me, bury me!*" still she heard the words, and she dreaded each moment to hear the cock crow, and to see the first red streak in the east, for if her task were not completed before the morning, she believed she would be lost. And the cock did crow, and light appeared in the east — and the grave was only half dug, and, behold, an icy hand passed over her head and face, thrilled down to her heart. And a voice sighed forth, "Only half the grave!" and a form hovered past downward toward the sea. Yes, it was indeed the "Spectre of the Shore," and Anne Lisbeth fell swooning to the earth.

It was bright daylight when she came to herself. Two men were lifting her; she was lying, not in the church-yard, but down by the shore, where she had been digging a deep hole in the sand, and had wounded her finger with a broken glass, the stem whereof was set in a wooden foot, painted blue.

Anne Lisbeth was ill; her conscience had spoken loud that night, and the spectres of superstition had blended their voices with the voices of conscience. And she had no power to discern between them; she now believed that she had but half a soul, and that the other half had been borne hence by her child, borne away to the depths of the sea; never could she hope for heaven's mercy till she had again the half-soul that was imprisoned in the deep waters.

Anne Lisbeth went home; she was no longer as she had been before, her thoughts were like a tangled skein, one thread only could she clearly lay hold of. She must carry the "Spectre of the Shore" to the church-yard, and there dig a grave for it; this one idea possessed her. Many a night she was missed from her home, and always was she found down by the shore waiting for the spectre. So passed away a whole

twelvemonth. Then again at night she disappeared, and was sought for in vain.

Toward evening, when the sacristan came into church to ring the Vesper bell, he found Anne Lisbeth lying in front of the altar. Here she had been ever since the early morning hour; her strength was almost gone, but her eye glistened, and a faint rosy hue lighted up her face as the last sunbeams shone in upon her, streamed over the altar, and glowed on the bright silver clasps of the large open Bible, open at this text of the Prophet Joel: "Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." That was a singular chance, folk said, — so much is done by chance in this world, according to some people.

But as the setting sun shone on Anne Lisbeth's face, it spoke of calm rest and peace. All was well with her now, she said. She had won back her soul! For during the past night the spectre, her own child, had been with her, and had said, "Thou hast dug only half a grave for me! true! but thou hast now for a year and a day entombed me in thine heart, and that is the only right resting-place a mother can provide for her child!" And then he had given back her lost half-soul and guided her into the church!

"And now I am in God's house," said she. "It is blessed to be here."

By the time the sun had set, Anne Lisbeth's soul had left this earth for the world where fear is unknown, where all sins are blotted out, even such as Anne Lisbeth's.

THE CANDLES.

THERE was a great Wax-light that knew well enough what it was.

"I am born in wax, and moulded in a form," it said. "I give more light, and burn a longer time than any other light. My place is in the chandelier, or silver candlestick."

"That must be a charming life!" said the Tallow-candle. "I am only of tallow, — only a tallow dip; but then, I comfort myself, it is always better than to be a mere taper, that is dipped only two times: I am dipped eight times, to get a decent thickness. I'm satisfied. It would, to be sure, be finer and luckier still to have been born in wax, and not in tallow; but one doesn't fix himself. They are put in great rooms, and in glass candlesticks. I live in the kitchen, — but that is a good place, too; they get up all the dishes in the house there."

"There is something that is more important than eating!" said the Wax-candle. "Good company, — to see them shine, and shine yourself. There is a ball here this evening. Now I and all my family are soon to be sent for."

Scarcely was this said, when all the Wax-lights were sent for, — but the Tallow-candle too. The mistress took it in her delicate hand, and carried it out into the kitchen; there stood a little boy with a basket that was full of potatoes, and a few apples were in it too. The good lady had given all these to the little poor boy.

"Here is a candle for you, my little friend," said she. "Your mother sits up and works far into the night, — she can use this."

The lady's little daughter stood by her; and when she heard the words "far into the night," she said, eagerly, "And I'm going to sit up till night, too! We're going to have a ball, and I'm to wear big red bows for it."

How her face shone! yes, that was happiness! no wax-light could shine like the child's eyes.

"That is a blessed thing to see," thought the Tallow-candle. "I shall never forget it, and certainly it seems to me there can be nothing more." And so the Candle was laid in the basket under the cover, and the boy took it away.

"Where am I going to now?" thought the Candle. "I shall be with poor folks, perhaps not once get a brass candlestick; but the Wax-light is stuck in silver, and sees the finest folks! What can there be more delightful than to be a light among fine folks? That's my lot, — tallow, not wax."

And so the Candle came to the poor people, — a widow with three children, in a little, low studded room, right over opposite the rich house.

"God bless the good lady for what she gave!" said the mother; "it is a splendid candle, — it can burn till far into the night."

And the Candle was lighted.

"Pugh!" it said. "That was a horrid match she lighted me with. One hardly offers such a thing as that to a wax-light, over at the rich house."

There also the wax-lights were lighted, and shone out over the street. The carriages rumbled up to the rich house with the guests for the ball, dressed so finely; the music struck up.

"Now they're beginning over there," felt the Tallow-candle, and thought of the little rich girl's bright face, that was brighter than all the wax-lights. "That sight I never shall see any more."

Then the smallest of the children in the poor house came — she was a little girl — and put her arms round her brother and sister's necks; she had something very important to tell, and must whisper it.

"We're going to have this evening, — just think of it, — we're going to have this evening warm potatoes!" and her face beamed with happiness. The Candle shone right at her, and saw a pleasure, a happiness, as great as was in the rich house, where the little girl said, "We are going to have a ball this evening, and I shall wear some great red bows."

"Is it such a great thing to get warm potatoes?" thought

THE CANDLES. See page 171.

the Candle. "Well, here is just the same joy among the little things!" and it sneezed[1] at that, — that is, it sputtered, — and more than that no tallow-candle could do. The table was spread, the potatoes were eaten. O, how good they tasted! it was a real feast; and then each got an apple besides, and the smallest child sang the little verse, —

"Now thanks, dear Lord, I give to Thee,
That Thou again hast filléd me. Amen."

"Was not that said prettily?" asked the little girl.

"You mustn't ask that, or say it," said the mother. "You should only thank the good God, who has filled you."

And the little children went to bed, gave a good-night kiss, and fell asleep right away; and the mother sat till far into the night, and sewed, to get a living for them and herself; and from the rich house the lights shone, and the music sounded. The stars twinkled over all the houses, over the rich and over the poor, just as clear, just as kindly.

"That was in sooth a rare evening," thought the Tallow-candle. "Do you think the wax-lights had any better time in their silver candlesticks? that I'd like to know before I am burnt out!"

And it thought of the happy children's faces, the two alike happy, — the one lighted by wax-light, the other by tallow-candle.

Yes, that is the story.

[1] In Danish popular talk to sneeze at a thing, is the same as to nod assent.

GOOD HUMOR.

FROM my father I have inherited that best inheritance — Good Humor. "And who was my father?" it will be asked. Now what signifies who he was? He was a thriving, lively, happy, little man, his exterior and interior equally at variance with his office. "And what was his office, his position in the community?" — That will be the next question; and it strikes me that if the answer to it were written and printed right at the beginning of a book, most people would lay the book down almost as soon as they had opened it, saying, "That is enough; I don't want anything of this kind." And yet my father was neither hangman nor headsman; on the contrary, his office often brought him into communication with the most honorable men of the state; and in such cases he invariably took precedence of them, even of bishops and princes of the blood royal, for — to confess the truth — he was the driver of a hearse!

Now the worst is said! — and it must be added that when my father was seen sitting up on high, his face, despite the garnish of the long black mantle and crape-bordered, three-cornered hat, ever benign, contented, and placid, no one could help feeling that either he, or the great, heavy, dismal hearse, with its unseemly and melancholy pomp, was strangely out of place. But enough of this; suffice it to say that, from my father, besides my good humor, I have inherited two habits: my first, that of paying frequent visits to the churchyard; secondly, that of reading all the newspapers, but especially the advertisement sheets.

I am not exactly young; I have neither wife, children, nor library to entertain me, but as I have already said, I read all the advertisements through, and they supply me with a fund of ever-varying amusement. From them I know who preaches in the churches and who preaches in the new books; I know

where I may get houses, servants, well-fitting clothes, and delicacies for the table — when I want them; I know who is selling off and who is buying in. Then, too, I hear of so many deeds of pure, disinterested benevolence! I read so many such innocent verses! their author may have intended them to convey cutting sarcasms, but they are quite guiltless of offense to any one. I become, by dint of patient study, and at the cost of a little imagination, initiated into so many interesting family mysteries; — all this through reading the advertisement sheets.

Every one, of course, is free to read the newspapers at pleasure; but as for my second amusement, my walks in the church-yard, if anybody would like to share it, let him come with me some day when the sun shines and the trees are green; then let us ramble together among the graves; each one is like a closed book with the back set out toward you, so that you can just read the title which tells you what the book contains. Too often, though, the title is a complete misnomer: no matter, I know all about it, I have it all in a book I have written for my own especial benefit and instruction, and I will impart some of its contents to my companion.

Now we are in the church-yard.

Here, behind this white-painted trellis-work, within which once grew a rose-tree, — it is dead now from neglect, but a stray bit of evergreen from the neighboring grave stretches a long green arm over the sod, as though to compensate for the loss and make a little show, — here rests a man who was singularly unhappy. Yet no one would have called him unfortunate; he had a sufficient income, and was never visited by any great calamity. His unhappiness was, in fact, of his own making; according to the common phrase, he took everything too much to heart. Thus, if he went one evening to the theatre, it was sufficient to spoil his enjoyment that the machinist had put too strong a light into the moon, or that the scene-painter had been guilty of some such mistake as introducing a palm-tree into a home-landscape, cactuses among the plains of Tyrol, or beech-trees on the Norwegian mountains. If the play and the actors were right, the audience was sure to be wrong, applauding too much or too little, or

laughing when they had no business to laugh; and this was enough to vex him thoroughly. Petty mischances, minor misunderstandings, made the misery of his life; an especially unhappy man was he.

Here rests a very fortunate man, a man of extremely high birth, wherein, in fact, consisted his good fortune, for, had he not been high-born nothing could have ever been made of him. But everything is so wisely arranged, and so it was in this case. He went to and fro in state, he was introduced into the saloons of great people, very much as a fine embroidered bell-rope is introduced into a room, — behind the handsome show bell-rope is always a good strong cord which really does all the service required. And this man had his good cord behind him, who now pulls the wires behind a new embroidered bell-rope. Is it not so? everything is so wisely arranged that it is easy enough to keep up one's good humor.

Here rests — nay, now this is really sad! — here rests a man who during threescore and seven years worried himself and worked his brains to hit upon a happy idea. For the sake of this happy idea he lived alone all his days, and when at last he had persuaded himself that he had succeeded, he was so overcome that he died of joy, — died of joy at having found it, — died before he had time to announce it to the world. I can almost fancy that he has no rest in his grave, because of the happy idea at last conceived, but which no one but himself has rejoiced over, or ever can rejoice over. For, look you, this was an idea such as to produce a sensation should it be brought out before a merry breakfast-party. Now it is universally received that ghosts can only walk at midnight; should this ghost, therefore, come forth at the appointed hour and appear among his friends, his idea would be a total failure; no one will laugh, for jesting comes unseasonably at midnight, and so the ill-fated ghost will return disappointed to his grave. It really is very sad.

Here reposes a lady noted for her thriftiness; during her life-time she was wont to get up at night and mew, that her neighbors might imagine she kept a cat, which she did not: there was thriftiness for you.

And here a young lady of good family; in society she was always called upon to sing, and when she sang, "Mi manca la voce!" that was the sole and only truth in her life.

And here rests another young girl, — a very different nature. Alas! when the heart's canary-bird begins to sing, too often will Reason put her finger in her ears. Poor girl, so young, so lovely! — it is an old story; may she rest in peace!

Here lies a widow lady who had the sweetness of the dove on her lips, and the gall of the owl in her heart. Like a bird of prey, she went about from one family to another, feeding upon her neighbors' faults.

This is a family vault; every member of the race to which it belonged lived in the faith that whatever the world and the newspaper said must needs be true. If the youngest grandson of that house came home from school and said, "So have I heard it said;" whatever the news might be was received as unquestionable. And certain it is that if the cock belonging to that house had taken it into his head to crow at midnight, the whole family would have believed that morning had dawned, whatever the sky and the sun might have maintained to the contrary.

The great Goethe concluded his "Faust" with the words, "It may be continued;" in like manner I will conclude our walk in the church-yard. My visits are frequent, for whenever any one of my friends, or unfriends, gives me a reason to suppose that he wishes to be the same as dead to me, I go thither, seek out an unoccupied spot of green turf, and dedicate it to him. Thus I have buried many of my acquaintances: there they lie, powerless to hurt me; and meanwhile, I look forward to the time when they may return to life again, better and wiser than they were before. Their life and history, as seen from my point of view, I write down in my book. And here let me recommend others to do as I do, namely, when they have received a slight or wound from any one, to bury the offender out of sight and out of mind, and whatever evil chances befall, to keep constant to Good Humor.

THE PRINCESS ON THE PEA.

THERE was once a Prince who wanted to marry a Princess; but she was to be a *real* princess. So he travelled about, all through the world, to find a real one, but everywhere there was something in the way. There were princesses enough, but whether they were *real* princesses he could not quite make out: there was always something that did not seem quite right. So he came home again, and was quite sad: for he wished so much to have a real princess.

One evening a terrible storm came on. It lightened and thundered, the rain streamed down; it was quite fearful! Then there was a knocking at the town gate, and the old King went out to open it.

It was a Princess who stood outside the gate. But, mercy! how she looked, from the rain and the rough weather! The water ran down from her hair and her clothes; it ran in at the points of her shoes, and out at the heels; and yet she declared that she was a real princess.

"Yes, we will soon find that out," thought the old Queen. But she said nothing, only went into the bedchamber, took all the bedding off, and put a pea on the flooring of the bedstead; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them upon the pea, and then twenty eider-down beds upon the mattresses. On this the Princess had to lie all night. In the morning she was asked how she had slept.

"O, miserably!" said the Princess. "I scarcely closed my eyes all night long. Goodness knows what was in my bed. I lay upon something hard, so that I am black and blue all over. It is quite dreadful!"

Now they saw that she was a real princess, for through the twenty mattresses and the twenty eider-down beds she had

THE PRINCESS ON THE PEA. See page 178.

felt the pea. No one but a real princess could be so delicate.

So the Prince took her for his wife, for now he knew that he had a true princess; and the pea was put in the museum, and it is there now, unless somebody has carried it off.

Look you, this is a true story.

THE OLD STREET LAMP.

DID you ever hear the story of the old Street Lamp? It is not very remarkable, but it may be listened to for once in a way.

It was a very honest old Lamp, that had done its work for many, many years, but which was now to be pensioned off. It hung for the last time to its post, and gave light to the street. It felt as an old dancer at the theatre, who is dancing for the last time, and who to-morrow will sit forgotten in her garret. The Lamp was in great fear about the morrow, for it knew that it was to appear in the council-house, and to be inspected by the mayor and the council, to see if it were fit for further service or not.

And then it was to be decided whether it was to show its light in future for the inhabitants of some suburb, or in the country in some manufactory: perhaps it would have to go at once into an iron foundry to be melted down. In this last case anything might be made of it; but the question whether it would remember, in its new state, that it had been a Street Lamp, troubled it terribly. Whatever might happen, this much was certain, that it would be separated from the watchman and his wife, whom it had got to look upon as quite belonging to its family. When the Lamp had been hung up for the first time the watchman was a young sturdy man: it happened to be the very evening on which he entered on his office. Yes, that was certainly a long time ago, when it first became a Lamp and he a watchman. The wife was a little proud in those days. Only in the evening, when she went by, she deigned to glance at the Lamp; in the daytime never. But now, in these latter years, when all three, the watchman, his wife, and the Lamp, had grown old, the wife had also tended it, cleaned it, and provided it with oil. The two old people were thoroughly honest; never had they cheated the Lamp of a single drop of the oil provided for it.

It was the Lamp's last night in the street, and to-morrow it was to go to the council-house; — those were two dark thoughts! No wonder that it did not burn brightly. But many other thoughts passed through its brain. On what a number of events had it shone — how much it had seen! Perhaps as much as the mayor and the whole council had beheld. But it did not give utterance to these thoughts, for it was a good honest old Lamp, that would not willingly hurt any one, and least of all those in authority. Many things passed through its mind, and at times its light flashed up. In such moments it had a feeling that it, too, would be remembered.

"There was that handsome young man — it is certainly a long while ago — he had a letter on pink paper with a gilt edge. It was so prettily written, as if by a lady's hand. Twice he read it, and kissed it, and looked up to me with eyes which said plainly, 'I am the happiest of men!' Only he and I know what was written in this first letter from his true love. Yes, I remember another pair of eyes. It is wonderful how our thoughts fly about! There was a funeral procession in the street: the young beautiful lady lay in the decorated hearse, in a coffin adorned with flowers and wreaths; and a number of torches quite darkened my light. The people stood in crowds by the houses, and all followed the procession. But when the torches had passed from before my face, and I looked round, a single person stood leaning against my post, weeping. I shall never forget the mournful eyes that looked up to me!"

This and similar thoughts occupied the old Street Lantern, which shone to-night for the last time.

The sentry relieved from his post, at least knows who is to succeed him, and may whisper a few words to him; but the Lamp did not know its successor; and yet it might have given a few useful hints with respect to rain and fog, and some information as to how far the rays of the moon lit up the pavement, from what direction the wind usually came, and much more of the same kind.

On the bridge of the gutter stood three persons who wished to introduce themselves to the Lamp, for they thought the Lamp itself could appoint its successor. The first was a her

ring's head, that could gleam with light in the darkness. He thought it would be a great saving of oil if they put him up on the post. Number two was a piece of rotten wood, which also glimmers in the dark. He conceived himself descended from an old stem, once the pride of the forest. The third person was a glow-worm. Where this one had come from the Lamp could not imagine; but there it was, and it could give light. But the rotten wood and the herring's head swore by all that was good that it only gave light at certain times, and could not be brought into competition with themselves.

The old Lamp declared that not one of them gave sufficient light to fill the office of a street lamp; but not one of them would believe this. When they heard that the Lamp had not the office to give away, they were very glad of it, and declared that the Lamp was too decrepit to make a good choice.

At the same moment the Wind came careering from the corner of the street, and blew through the air-holes of the old Street Lamp.

"What's this I hear?" he asked. "Are you to go away to-morrow? Do I see you for the last time? Then I must make you a present at parting. I will blow into your brain-box in such a way that you shall be able in future not only to remember everything you have seen and heard, but that you shall have such light within you as shall enable you to see all that is read of or spoken of in your presence."

"Yes, that is really much, very much!" said the old Lamp. "I thank you heartily. I only hope I shall not be melted down."

"That is not likely to happen at once," said the Wind. "Now I will blow a memory into you: if you receive several presents of this kind, you may pass your old days very agreeably."

"If I am only not melted down!" said the Lamp again. "Or should I retain my memory even in that case?"

"Be sensible, old Lamp," said the Wind. And he blew, and at that moment the Moon stepped forth from behind the clouds.

"What will you give the old Lamp?" asked the Wind.

"I'll give nothing," replied the Moon. "I am on the wane,

and the lamps never lighted me; but, on the contrary, I've often given light for the lamps."

And with these words the Moon hid herself again behind the clouds, to be safe from further importunity.

A drop now fell upon the Lamp, as if from the roof; but the drop explained that it came from the clouds, and was a present — perhaps the best present possible.

"I shall penetrate you so completely that you shall receive the faculty, if you wish it, to turn into rust in one night, and to crumble into dust."

The Lamp considered this a bad present, and the Wind thought so too.

"Does no one give more? does no one give more?" it blew as loud as it could.

Then a bright shooting star fell down, forming a long bright stripe.

"What was that?" cried the Herring's Head. "Did not a star fall? I really think it went into the Lamp! Certainly if such high-born personages try for this office, we may say good-night and betake ourselves home."

And so they did, all three. But the old Lamp shed a marvelous strong light around.

"That was a glorious present," it said. "The bright stars which I have always admired, and which shine as I could never shine though I shone with all my might, have noticed me, a poor old lamp, and have sent me a present, by giving me the faculty that all I remember and see as clearly as if it stood before me, shall also be seen by all whom I love. And in this lies the true pleasure; for joy that we cannot share with others is only half enjoyed."

"That sentiment does honor to your heart," said the Wind. "But for that wax-lights are necessary. If these are not lit up in you, your rare faculties will be of no use to others. Look you, the stars did not think of that; they take you and every other light for wax. But I will go down." And he went down.

"Good heavens! wax-lights!" exclaimed the Lamp. "I never had those till now, nor am I likely to get them!—If I am only not melted down!"

The next day — yes, it will be best that we pass over the next day. The next evening the Lamp was resting in a grandfather's chair. And guess where! In the watchman's dwelling. He had begged as a favor of the mayor and the council that he might keep the Street Lamp, in consideration of his long and faithful service, for he himself had put up and lit the lantern for the first time on the first day of entering on his duties four and twenty years ago. He looked upon it as his child, for he had no other. And the Lamp was given to him.

Now it lay in the great arm-chair by the warm stove. It seemed as if the Lamp had grown bigger, now that it occupied the chair all alone.

The old people sat at supper, and looked kindly at the old Lamp, to whom they would willingly have granted a place at their table.

Their dwelling was certainly only a cellar two yards below the foot-way, and one had to cross a stone passage to get into the room. But within it was very comfortable and warm, and strips of list had been nailed to the door. Everything looked clean and neat, and there were curtains round the bed and the little windows. On the window-sill stood two curious flower-pots, which sailor Christian had brought home from the East or West Indies. They were only of clay, and represented two elephants. The backs of these creatures had been cut off; and instead of them there bloomed from within the earth with which one elephant was filled, some very excellent chives, and that was the kitchen garden; out of the other grew a great geranium, and that was the flower garden. On the wall hung a great colored print representing the Congress of Vienna. There you had all the Kings and Emperors at once. A clock with heavy weights went "tick! tick!" and in fact it always went too fast; but the old people declared this was far better than if it went too slow. They ate their supper, and the Street Lamp lay, as I have said, in the arm-chair close beside the stove. It seemed to the Lamp as if the whole world had been turned round. But when the old watchman looked at it, and spoke of all that they two had gone through in rain and in fog, in the bright short nights of

summer and in the long winter nights, when the snow beat down, and one longed to be at home in the cellar, then the old Lamp found its wits again. It saw everything as clearly as if it was happening then; yes, the Wind had kindled a capital light for it.

The old people were very active and industrious; not a single hour was wasted in idleness. On Sunday afternoon some book or other was brought out; generally a book of travels. And the old man read aloud about Africa, about the great woods, with elephants running about wild; and the old woman listened intently, and looked furtively at the clay elephants which served for flower-pots.

"I can almost imagine it to myself!" said she.

And the Lamp wished particularly that a wax candle had been there, and could be lighted up in it; for then the old woman would be able to see everything to the smallest detail, just as the Lamp saw it — the tall trees with great branches all entwined, the naked black men on horseback, and whole droves of elephants crashing through the reeds with their broad clumsy feet.

"Of what use are all my faculties if I can't obtain a wax-light?" sighed the Lamp. "They have only oil and tallow candles, and that's not enough."

One day a great number of wax candle ends came down into the cellar: the larger pieces were burned, and the smaller ones the old woman used for waxing her thread. So there were wax candles enough; but no one thought of putting a little piece into the Lamp.

"Here I stand with my rare faculties!" thought the Lamp. "I carry everything within me, and cannot let them partake of it; they don't know that I am able to cover these white walls with the most gorgeous tapestry, to change them into noble forests, and all that they can possibly wish."

The Lamp, however, was kept neat and clean, and stood all shining in a corner, where it caught the eyes of all. Strangers considered it a bit of old rubbish; but the old people did not care for that; they loved the Lamp.

One day — it was the old watchman's birthday — the old woman approached the Lamp, smiling to herself, and said, —

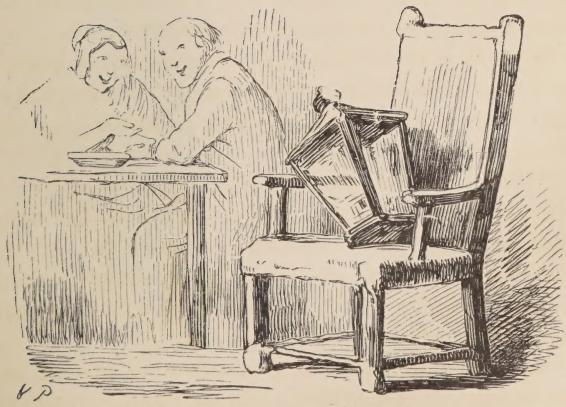
"I'll make an illumination to-day, in honor of my old man!"

And the Lamp rattled its metal cover, for it thought, "Well, at last there will be a light within me." But only oil was produced, and no wax-light appeared. The Lamp burned throughout the whole evening, but now understood, only too well, that the gift of the stars would be a hidden treasure for all its life. Then it had a dream: for one possessing its rare faculties to dream was not difficult. It seemed as if the old people were dead, and that itself had been taken to the iron foundry to be melted down. It felt as much alarmed as on that day when it was to appear in the council-house to be inspected by the mayor and council. But though the power had been given to it to fall into rust and dust at will, it did not use this power. It was put into the furnace, and turned into an iron candlestick, as fair a candlestick as you would desire — one on which wax-lights were to be burned. It had received the form of an angel holding a great nosegay; and the wax-light was to be placed in the middle of the nosegay.

The candlestick had a place assigned to it on a green writing table. The room was very comfortable; many books stood round about the walls, which were hung with beautiful pictures: it belonged to a poet. Everything that he wrote or composed showed itself round about him. Nature appeared sometimes in thick dark forests, sometimes in beautiful meadows, where the storks strutted about; sometimes again in a ship sailing on the foaming ocean, or in the blue sky with all its stars.

"What faculties lie hidden in me!" said the old Lamp, when it awoke. "I could almost wish to be melted down! But, no! that must not be so long as the old people live. They love me for myself; they have cleaned me and brought me oil. I am as well off now as the whole Congress, in looking at which they also take pleasure."

And from that time it enjoyed more inward peace; and the honest old Street Lamp had well deserved to enjoy it.



THE OLD STREET LAMP. See page 180.

EVERYTHING IN ITS RIGHT PLACE.

IT is more than a hundred years ago.

Behind the wood, by the great lake, stood the old baronial mansion. Round about it lay a deep moat, in which grew reeds and grass. Close by the bridge, near the entrance gate, rose an old willow-tree that bent over the reeds.

Up from the hollow lane sounded the clang of horns and the trampling of horses, therefore the little girl who kept the geese hastened to drive her charges away from the bridge, before the hunting company should come galloping up. They drew near with such speed that the girl was obliged to climb up in a hurry, and perch herself on the coping-stone of the bridge, lest she should be ridden down. She was still half a child, and had a pretty light figure, and a gentle expression in her face, with two clear blue eyes. The noble baron took no note of this, but as he galloped past the little goose-herd he reversed the whip he held in his hand, and in rough sport gave her such a push in the chest with the butt-end that she fell backward into the ditch.

"Everything in its place!" he cried; "into the puddle with you!" And he laughed aloud, for this was intended for wit, and the company joined in his mirth: the whole party shouted and clamored, and the dogs barked their loudest.

Fortunately for herself, the poor girl in falling seized one of the hanging branches of the willow-tree, by means of which she kept herself suspended over the muddy water, and as soon as the baron and his company had disappeared through the castle-gate, the girl tried to scramble up again; but the bough broke off at the top, and she would have fallen backward among the reeds, if a strong hand from above had not at that moment seized her. It was the hand of a peddler, who had seen from a short distance what had happened, and who now hurried up to give aid.

"Everything in its right place!" he said, mimicking the gracious baron; and he drew the little maiden up to the firm ground. He would have restored the broken branch to the place from which it had been torn, but "everything in its place" cannot always be managed, and therefore he stuck the piece in the ground. "Grow and prosper till you can furnish a good flute for them up yonder," he said; for he would have liked to play the "rogue's march" for my lord the baron and my lord's whole family. And then he betook himself to the castle, but not into the ancestral hall: he was too humble for that! He went to the servant's quarters, and the men and maids turned over his stock of goods, and bargained with him; and from above, where the guests were at table, came a sound of roaring and screaming that was intended for song, and indeed they did their best. Loud laughter, mingled with the barking and howling of dogs, sounded through the windows, for there was feasting and carousing up yonder. Wine and strong old ale foamed in the jugs and glasses, and the dogs sat with their masters and dined with them. They had the peddler summoned up stairs, but only to make fun of him. The wine had mounted into their heads, and the sense had flown out. They poured wine into a stocking, that the peddler might drink with them, but that he must drink quickly; that was considered a rare jest, and was the cause of fresh laughter. And then whole farms, with oxen and peasants too, were staked on a card, and lost and won.

"Everything in its right place!" said the peddler, when he had at last made his escape out of what he called "the Sodom and Gomorrah up yonder," "The open high-road is my right place," he said; "I did not feel at all happy there."

And the little maiden who sat keeping the geese nodded at him in a friendly way, as he strode along beside the hedges.

And days and weeks went by; and it became manifest that the willow branch which the peddler had stuck into the ground by the castle moat remained fresh and green, and even brought forth new twigs. The little goose-girl saw that the branch must have taken root, and rejoiced greatly at the circumstance; for this tree, she said, was now her tree.

The tree certainly came forward well; but everything else

belonging to the castle went very rapidly back, what with feasting and gambling — for these two are like wheels, upon which no man can stand securely.

Six years had not passed away before the noble lord passed out of the castle gate, a beggared man, and the mansion was bought by a rich dealer; and this purchaser was the very man who had once been made a jest of there, for whom wine had been poured into a stocking; but honesty and industry are good winds to speed a vessel; and now the dealer was possessor of the baronial estate. But from that hour no more card-playing was permitted there.

"That is bad reading," said he: "when the Evil One saw a Bible for the first time, he wanted to put a bad book against it, and invented card-playing."

The new proprietor took a wife, and who might that be but the goose-girl, who had always been faithful and good, and looked as beautiful and fine in her new clothes as if she had been born a great lady. And how did all this come about? That is too long a story for our busy time, but it really happened, and the most important part is to come.

It was a good thing now to be in the old mansion. The mother managed the domestic affairs, and the father superintended the estate, and it seemed as if blessings were streaming down. Where rectitude enters in, prosperity is sure to follow. The old house was cleaned and painted, the ditches were cleared, and fruit-trees planted. Everything wore a bright cheerful look, and the floors were as polished as a draught-board. In the long winter evenings the lady sat at the spinning-wheel with her maids, and every Sunday evening there was a reading from the Bible by the Councilor of Justice himself — this title the dealer had gained, though it was only in his old age. The children grew up — for children had come — and they received the best education, though all had not equal abilities — as we find indeed in all families.

In the mean time the willow branch at the castle gate had grown to be a splendid tree, which stood there free and self-sustained. "That is our genealogical tree," the old people said, and the tree was to be honored and respected — so they told all the children, even those who had not very good heads.

And a hundred years rolled by.

It was in our own time. The lake had been converted to moorland, and the old mansion had almost disappeared. A pool of water and the ruins of some walls, this was all that was left of the old baronial castle, with its deep moat; and here stood also a magnificent old willow, with pendant boughs, which seemed to show how beautiful a tree may be if left to itself. The main stem was certainly split from the root to the crown, and the storm had bowed the noble tree a little; but it stood firm for all that, and from every cleft into which wind and weather had carried a portion of earth, grasses and flowers sprang forth; especially near the top, where the great branches parted, a sort of hanging garden had been formed of wild raspberry bush, and even a small quantity of mistletoe had taken root, and stood slender and graceful, in the midst of the old willow, which was mirrored in the dark water. A field-path led close by the old tree.

High by the forest hill, with a splendid prospect in every direction, stood the new baronial hall, large and magnificent, with panes of glass so clearly transparent, that it looked as if there were no panes there at all. The grand flight of steps that led to the entrance looked like a bower of roses and broad-leaved plants. The lawn was as freshly green as if each separate blade of grass were cleaned morning and evening. In the hall hung costly pictures; silken chairs and sofas stood there, so easy that they looked almost as if they could run by themselves; there were tables of great marble slabs, and books bound in morocco and gold. Yes, truly, people of rank lived here: the baron with his family.

All things here corresponded with each other. The motto was still "Everything in its right place;" and therefore all the pictures which had been put up in the old house for honor and glory, hung now in the passage that led to the servants' hall: they were considered as old lumber, and especially two old portraits, one representing a man in a pink coat and powdered wig, the other a lady with powdered hair and holding a rose in her hand, and each surrounded with a wreath of willow leaves. These two pictures were pierced with many holes, because the little barons were in the habit of setting up the

old people as a mark for their cross-bows. The pictures represented the Councilor of Justice and his lady, the founders of the present family.

"But they did not properly belong to our family," said one of the little barons. "He was a dealer, and she had kept the geese. They were not like papa and mamma."

The pictures were pronounced to be worthless; and as the motto was "Everything in its right place," the great grandmother and great grandfather were sent into the passage that led to the servants' hall.

The son of the neighboring clergyman was tutor in the great house. One day he was out walking with his pupils, the little barons and their eldest sister, who had just been confirmed; they came along the field-path past the old willow, and as they walked on the young lady bound a wreath of field flowers, "Everything in its right place," and the flowers formed a pretty whole. At the same time she heard every word that was spoken, and she liked to hear the clergyman's son talk of the power of nature, and of the great men and women in history. She had a good hearty disposition, with true nobility of thought and soul, and a heart full of love for all that God had created.

The party came to a halt at the old willow-tree. The youngest baron insisted on having such a flute cut for him from it as he had had made of other willows. Accordingly, the tutor broke off a branch.

"O, don't do that!" cried the young baroness; but it was done already. "That is our famous old tree," she continued, "and I love it dearly. They laugh at me at home for this, but I don't mind. There is a story attached to this tree."

And she told what we all know about the tree, about the old mansion, the peddler and the goose-girl, who had met for the first time in this spot, and had afterward become the founders of the noble family to which the young barons belonged.

"They would not be ennobled, the good old folks!" she said. "They kept to the motto, 'Everything in its right place;' and accordingly they thought it would be out of place for them to purchase a title with money. My grandfather, the first baron,

was their son. He is said to have been a very learned man, very popular with princes and princesses, and a frequent guest at the court festivals. The others at home love him best; but I don't know how, there seems to me something about that first pair that draws my heart toward them. How comfortable, how patriarchal it must have been in the old house, where the mistress sat at the spinning-wheel among her maids, and the old master read aloud from the Bible!"

"They were charming, sensible people," said the clergyman's son.

And with this the conversation naturally fell upon nobles and citizens. The young man scarcely seemed to belong to the citizen class, so well did he speak concerning the purpose and meaning of nobility. He said, "It is a great thing to belong to a family that has distinguished itself, and thus to have, as it were, in one's blood, a spur that urges one on to make progress in all that is good. It is delightful to have a name that serves as a card of admission into the highest circles. Nobliity means that which is great and noble: it is a coin that has received a stamp to indicate what it is worth. It is the fallacy of the time, and many poets have frequently maintained this fallacy, that nobility of birth is accompanied by foolishness, and that the lower you go among the poor, the more does everything around you shine. But that is not my view, for I consider it entirely false. In the higher classes many beautiful and kindly traits are found. My mother told me one of this kind, and I could tell you many others.

"My mother was on a visit to a great family in town. My grand mother, I think, had been housekeeper to the count's mother. The great nobleman and my mother were alone in the room, when the former noticed that an old woman came limping on crutches into the court-yard. Indeed, she was accustomed to come every Sunday, and carry away a gift with her. 'Ah, there is the poor old lady,' said the nobleman: 'walking is a great toil to her;' and before my mother understood what he meant, he had gone out of the room and run down the stairs, to save the old woman the toilsome walk, by carrying to her the gift she had come to receive.

"Now, that was only a small circumstance, but, like the

widow's two mites in the Scripture, it has a sound that finds an echo in the depths of the heart in human nature ; and these are the things the poet should show and point out ; especially in these times should he sing of it, for that does good, and pacifies and unites men. But where a bit of mortality, because it has a genealogical tree and a coat of arms, rears up like an Arabian horse, and prances in the street, and says in the room, 'People out of the street have been here,' when a commoner has been — that is nobility in decay, and become a mere mask — a mask of the kind that Thespis created ; and people are glad when such a one is turned into satire."

This was the speech of the clergyman's son. It was certainly rather long, but then the flute was being finished while he made it.

At the castle there was a great company. Many guests came from the neighborhood and from the capital. Many ladies, some tastefully and others tastelessly dressed, were there, and the great hall was quite full of people. The clergymen from the neighborhood stood respectfully congregated in a corner, which made it look almost as if there were to be a burial there. But it was not so, for this was a party of pleasure, only that the pleasure had not yet begun.

A great concert was to be performed, and consequently the little baron had brought in his willow flute ; but he could not get a note out of it, nor could his papa, and therefore the flute was worth nothing. There was instrumental music and song, both of the kind that delight the performers most — quite charming !

"You are a performer ?" said a cavalier — his father's son and nothing else — to the tutor. "You play the flute and make it too — that's genius. That should command, and should have the place of honor !"

"No, indeed," replied the young man, "I only advance with the times, as every one is obliged to do."

"O, you will enchant us with the little instrument, will you not ?"

And with these words he handed to the clergyman's son the flute cut from the willow-tree by the pool, and announced aloud that the tutor was about to perform a solo on that instrument.

Now, they only wanted to make fun of him, that was easily seen; and therefore the tutor would not play, though indeed he could do so very well; but they crowded round him and importuned him so strongly, that at last he took the flute and put it to his lips.

That was a wonderful flute! A sound, as sustained as that which is emitted by the whistle of a steam-engine, and much stronger, echoed far over court-yard, garden, and wood, miles away into the country; and simultaneously with the tone came a rushing wind that roared, "Everything in its right place!" And papa flew as if carried by the wind straight out of the hall and into the shepherd's cot; and the shepherd flew, not into the hall for there he could not come — no, but into the room of the servants, among the smart lackeys who strutted about there in silk stockings; and the proud servants were struck motionless with horror at the thought that such a personage dared to sit down to table with them.

But in the hall the young baroness flew up to the place of honor at the top of the table, where she was worthy to sit; and the young clergyman's son had a seat next to her; and there the two sat as if they were a newly-married pair. An old count of one of the most ancient families in the country remained untouched in his place of honor; for the flute was just, as men ought to be. The witty cavalier, the son of his father and nothing else, who had been the cause of the flute-playing, flew head over heels into the poultry-house — but not alone.

For a whole mile round about the sounds of the flute were heard, and singular events took place. A rich banker's family, driving along in a coach and four, was blown quite out of the carriage, and could not even find a place on the footboard at the back. Two rich peasants, who in our times had grown too high for their corn-fields, were tumbled into the ditch. It was a dangerous flute, that: luckily, it burst at the first note; and that was a good-thing, for then it was put back into the owner's pocket. "Every thing in its right place."

The day afterward not a word was said about this marvelous event; and thence has come the expression, "Pocketing the flute." Everything was in its usual order, only that the two

old portraits of the dealer and the goose-girl hung on the wal. in the banqueting-hall. They had been blown up yonder, and as one of the real connoisseurs said they had been painted by a master's hand, they remained where they were, and were restored. "Everything in its right place."

And to that it will come; for *hereafter* is long — longer than this story.

IN A THOUSAND YEARS.

YES, in a thousand years people will fly on the wings of steam through the air, over the ocean! The young inhabitants of America will become visitors of old Europe. They will come over to see the monuments and the great cities, which will then be in ruins, just as we in our time make pilgrimages to the tottering splendors of Southern Asia. In a thousand years they will come!

The Thames, the Danube, and the Rhine still roll their course, Mont Blanc stands firm with its snow-capped summit, and the Northern Lights gleam over the lands of the North; but generation after generation has become dust, whole rows of the mighty of the moment are forgotten, like those who already slumber under the hill on which the rich trader whose ground it is has built a bench, on which he can sit and look out across his waving corn-fields.

"To Europe!" cry the young sons of America; "to the land of our ancestors, the glorious land of monuments and fancy — to Europe!"

The ship of the air comes. It is crowded with passengers, for the transit is quicker than by sea. The electro-magnetic wire under the ocean has already telegraphed the number of the aërial caravan. Europe is in sight: it is the coast of Ireland that they see, but the passengers are still asleep; they will not be called till they are exactly over England. There they will first step on European shore, in the land of Shakespeare as the educated call it; in the land of politics, the land of machines, as it is called by others.

Here they stay a whole day. That is all the time the busy race can devote to the whole of England and Scotland. Then the journey is continued through the tunnel under the English Channel, to France, the land of Charlemagne and Napoleon. Molière is named: the learned men talk of the

classic school of remote antiquity: there is rejoicing and shouting for the names of heroes, poets, and men of science, whom our time does not know, but who will be born after our time in Paris, the centre of Europe, and elsewhere.

The air steamboat flies over the country whence Columbus went forth, where Cortez was born, and where Calderon sang dramas in sounding verse. Beautiful black-eyed women live still in the blooming valleys, and the oldest songs speak of the Cid and the Alhambra.

Then through the air, over the sea, to Italy, where once lay old, everlasting Rome. It has vanished! The Campagna lies desert: a single ruined wall is shown as the remains of St. Peter's, but there is a doubt if this ruin be genuine.

Next to Greece, to sleep a night in the grand hotel at the top of Mount Olympus, to say that they have been there; and the journey is continued to the Bosphorus, to rest there a few hours, and see the place where Byzantium lay; and where the legend tells that the harem stood in the time of the Turks, poor fishermen are now spreading their nets.

Over the remains of mighty cities on the broad Danube, cities which we in our time know not, the travellers pass; but here and there, on the rich sites of those that time shall bring forth, the caravan sometimes descends, and departs thence again.

Down below lies Germany, that was once covered with a close net of railways and canals, — the region where Luther spoke, where Goethe sang, and Mozart once held the sceptre of harmony. Great names shine there, in science and in art, names that are unknown to us. One day devoted to seeing Germany, and one for the North, the country of Örsted and Linnæus, and for Norway, the land of the old heroes and the young Normans. Iceland is visited on the journey home: the geysers burn no more, Hecla is an extinct volcano, but the rocky island is still fixed in the midst of the foaming sea, a continual monument of legend and poetry.

"There is really a great deal to be seen in Europe," says the young American, "and we have seen it in a week, according to the directions of the great traveller" (and here he mentions the name of one of his contemporaries) "in his celebrated work, 'How to see all Europe in a Week.'"

A STRING OF PEARLS.

AS yet the railroad in Denmark extends only as far as from Copenhagen to Corsör; it is a chain of pearls. Europe has abundance of pearls far larger and more costly, such as Paris, London, Vienna, Naples. And yet many a man will point out as his favorite, choicest pearl, no such famous city as one of these, but, on the contrary, some little unnoticeable town, which is yet to him the home of homes, the dwelling-place of those dearest to him. Nay, often would he select, not a town at all, but only a single little house, half hidden among green hedges, a mere point hardly seen as the train rattles past.

How many pearls can we count on the line from Copenhagen to Corsör? We will consider six, which the majority must take note of; six to which old memories give a peculiar beauty and lustre.

Close by the hill where stands Frederick the Sixth's palace, the home of Oehlenschläger's[1] chilhood, and sheltered by a

[1] Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger, born 1779, died 1850, a Danish poet whose fame became European. He is best known as a tragic dramatist. Oehlenschläger's father combined the offices of organist and steward at "Friederiksberg" (the royal palace alluded to by Andersen), and here the young poet spent his early days; not uninfluenced, perhaps, by the solitary grandeur which surrounded him during the long winter months when that eminently summer residence was deserted by the Court, and he was free to wander about through the royal apartments alone, now gazing at pictures of kings and heroes, now sitting down to his first study of romances and fairy tales amidst a splendor which seemed to belong to them. From his earliest days his heart was given to the drama, and after making some fruitless attempts at business and law, circumstances so far favored him that after five years of travel in France, Germany, and Italy, he returned home to marry his early love, and become established among his own people in name and fame as a tragic dramatist. He received the honor of knighthood before his death, and held some official posts of importance. —M. G.

background of woods, glistens one of these pearls; it used to be called "The Cottage of Philemon and Baucis." For here two lovable old people,[1] Rahbek and his wife Camma, were wont to dwell; here, under this hospitable roof, were assembled all the most intellectual men of the last generation, the choicest spirits in Copenhagen; it was the holiday home of the intellectual. Nay, do not thou exclaim, "Alas, what a change!" for now it is the nursery of the intellect, a conservatory for sick plants, for the buds that have not strength to unfold the beauty of color and form, the capacity for blossoming and fruit-bearing latent within them. The idiots' home, encompassed and guarded by love, is in truth a holy spot, a conservatory for the sick plants that shall some day be transplanted hence to blossom in the paradise of God. Here, where once the strongest and keenest intellects were met to exchange thought and idea, here are now assembled the weakest; but still the soul's flame mounts heavenward from "The Cottage of Philemon and Baucis."

Old Roeskilde now lies before us, the home of ancient kings; the slender spires of the church rise above the low-built town and mirror themselves in Issefiord. Here we will seek out a grave — not that of the great Queen Margaret; no, within yonder white-walled church-yard it lies; an ordinary stone covers the spot where reposes the master of the organ; we remember, "There dwelt a king in Leire," etc. Roeskilde, thou burial-place of kings! the pearl for us here is only yon insignificant grave-stone, whereon is chiseled a lyre, and the name Weyse.

Now we come to Sigersted, near Ringsted town; the bed of the river is low; yellow corn now waves over the spot where Hagbarth's boat lay at anchor, not far from Signe's maiden bower. Who knows not the legend of Hagbarth, who was hanged on an oak-tree, while Signelil's bower stood in flames? who remembers not that legend of strong love?[2]

"Beautiful Sorö, encircled by woods!" The quiet old cloister town just peeps out through its moss-grown trees; the youths in the academy can glance across the lake toward the

[1] Kund Lyne Rahbek, Etatsraad and Professor, born 1760; died 1830.

[2] See note at the end.

world's highway, and hear the whistle and whiz of the train as it flies through the wood. Sorö, thou pearl indeed, thou keepest Holberg's [1] dust! Like a great white swan beside the deep woodland lake stands thy palace of learning, and near it, like the bright star-flower of the groves, gleams a tiny house, whence pious hymns reëcho throughout the land, where words are spoken to which even the peasant listens with delight. As the bird's song to the green wood, so is Ingemann [2] to Sorö.

On! to the town of Slagelse! Vanished is Antoorskov cloister, vanished the rich halls of the palace, yet one relic of old times still lingers here, — the wooden cross on the hill yonder; it has been repaired again, for it marks the spot where, according to the legend, St. Anders,[3] the priest of Slagelse, waked up, after having been carried from Palestine thither in the space of a single night.

Corsör! there wast thou born, Baggesen, thou master of words and wit! The ruined old ramparts of the dismantled

[1] Louis, Baron of Holberg, a popular Danish author (of both prose and poetry), born at Bergen in Norway, 1684, died 1754. He struggled with many difficulties in the acquisition of learning, but overcame them. "He travelled in England, Holland, France, and Italy," says his biographer; "and on his return to his native land, raised himself to fame, fortune, and rank, by his literary talents." — M. G.

[2] Bernhard Severin Ingemann, born in May, 1789, lector at the Academy of Sorö.

[3] St. Anders made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the beginning of the thirteenth century. When his eleven companions were ready to set sail homeward from Joppa, the wind being fair, he refused to depart before he had heard mass. So at the end of the service he stood forlorn on the shore, gazing sorrowfully on the ship that was bearing his comrades hence. Then came up one mounted on horseback, and invited him to ride with him. He did so, but presently fell asleep in the stranger's arms, and when he awoke, he looked round and marveled greatly, for he was lying on a hill close outside Slagelse; his companions, meantime, were slowly performing their voyage, and did not reach Denmark till long afterward. Another legend tells us that when St. Anders prayed in the open air he was wont to hang up his hat and gloves on the sunbeams the while; once only did they refuse to perform this office, and let the gloves fall to the ground, and this was when one of the people in his convent had scandalized the neighborhood by some petty theft. — *Translator.*

fortress are now the last visible relics of thy childhood's home; their shadows, lengthening at sunset, point out the spot where stood thy parents' house. Thou sweet singer! we will weave thee a garland of wild flowers, fling it into the lake, and the current will bear it to the coast of Kieler Fiord, where rest thine ashes; the tide shall bring thee a greeting from the rising generation — a greeting from thy birthplace, even Corsör, where I let fall the string of pearls.

. . . . . .

"Quite right! it is a string of pearls that stretches from Copenhagen to Corsör," said my grandmother, after hearing all this read aloud. "It is a row of pearls for me now, and it was the same forty years ago," she added. "We had no steam-engines then, we spent days over a journey that can now be achieved in as many hours. It was in 1815; I was then one-and-twenty — a charming age! Well, in those days, it was a great matter to journey to Copenhagen — the town of all towns, as we held it. My parents had not been there for twenty years; well, at last they were going, and I with them. We had talked about it for years beforehand, and now it had actually come to pass; it seemed as though a new life were beginning for me, and so in truth it was, after a fashion.

"There was such sewing and packing; and when at last we got off, such a crowd of good friends came out to bid us farewell. It was in the forenoon that we drove out of Odense in my parents' old-fashioned carriage, our acquaintances nodding to us from the windows all down the street, till we passed through St. George's Gate. The weather was beautiful, the birds sang, everything was a pleasure; we forgot that it was a long and wearisome road to Nyborg. Toward evening we reached it; the post did not arrive before the night, and the little sailing vessel had to wait for it. We got on board; there lay before as, as far as we could see, the wide, smooth waters. We lay down in our clothes, and went to sleep. When I waked up in the morning, and came on deck, nothing at all could be seen, mist covered the whole. I heard the cocks crowing, and knew by that that it must be sunrise; the bells were ringing, I knew not whence; then the mist faded away, and we found we were still close to Nyborg. A bit of a gale

sprung up later in the day, but right against us; we cruised and cruised about, and at last were lucky enough to get to Corsör by a little past eleven at night, having spent two-and-twenty hours over a distance of sixteen miles.

"I was right glad to get on land; but it was dark, the lamps burnt miserably, and all seemed so strange to me, who had never been in any town but Odense.

"'Look! Baggesen[1] was born here,' said my father; 'and in this house Birckner[2] lived!' And at hearing this, somehow the dark old town with its narrow little streets at once seemed to grow larger and brighter. And we were so glad to have solid earth under our feet. Sleep was out of the question for me, that night.

"Next morning we had to start early; we had before us a miserable road, with terribly great hillocks and holes as far as Slagelse, and afterward there was little improvement, and we wanted to get on to 'The Crab' in good time, and thus be able the same day to pay a visit to the miller's Emilius at Sorö. The miller's Emilius — so we called him then — he, you know, was your grandfather, my late husband the dean — he was then a student at Sorö, and had just passed his second examination.

"By the afternoon we got to 'The Crab,' which was then the very best inn on the whole journey, and such a pretty place! — well, that you must allow it is still. And Madame Plambek was a brisk hostess, and everything in the house was so clean and fresh. On the wall hung, framed and under a glass, Baggesen's letter to her; I liked to see that. And we went to Sorö, and there we found Emilius; and you may fancy how glad we were to see him, and he to see us. He was so attentive and pleasant; he went with us to see the church, to Absalon's grave, and Holberg's; he looked with us at the old monkish inscriptions, and sailed with us aross the lake. It was a most delicious evening! I remember thinking that to become a poet, one need only come to Sorö, and muse among these lovely, peaceful scenes. Then by moonlight we took the 'Philosopher's Walk,' as it is called,

[1] Jens Baggesen, born at Corsör, 1764; died in 1826.

[2] Michael Gottlieb Birckner, born 1756; died 1798.

the lonely path along the lake-side, joining the high-road near 'The Crab;' Emilius stayed and supped with us, and my mother declared he was grown so sensible and looked so well. It was just upon Whitsuntide, and in a few days he was to join his family at Copenhagen. Ah! those hours at Sorö and in 'The Crab Inn,' I reckon them among the choicest pearls of life!

"Next morning we started very early, for it was a long journey to Roeskilde, and there we had to see the cathedral, and father wanted to visit an old school-fellow in the evening. We slept at Roeskilde that night, and by noon next day reached Copenhagen. So we had spent three days over a journey that can now be taken in three hours, — Corsör to Copenhagen. The pearls on the way have not grown more costly — that could hardly be — but the chain is a new one. I stayed for three weeks at Copenhagen, and Emilius was with us for eighteen days; and when we journeyed back to Funen, he accompanied us as far as Corsör, and there, before we parted, we were betrothed; so it is no wonder that I should call the way from Copenhagen to Corsör a string of pearls.

"Afterward, when Emilius received his cure at Assens, we were married. We often talked over our journey to Copenhagen, and proposed taking it again, but then your mother made her appearance, and after her came her sisters and brothers, and there was so much to do among them all! And then Emilius was made a dean, — that was a great pleasure to me! Everything was a pleasure; but, somehow, we never got to Copenhagen. And now I am too old to travel by rail, but for all that I am right glad of the railway! it is a real blessing, for it brings you young ones quickly to me! Now, Odense is hardly further from Copenhagen than in my youth it was from Nyborg; you can fly to Italy in the time that it took us to journey to Copenhagen — that is something worth doing! No matter that I sit, sit here always; let others travel, so long as they travel sometimes to me. And you need not laugh at me, you young folks, for sitting so still, day after day, for I have really a great journey before me; I shall soon have to travel at a pace far swifter than the railway's. For when our Lord wills it, I shall go to join your grandfather; and you

too, when you have completed your work on this dear earth, will join us also; and then, if we talk over the days of our mortal life, believe me, children, I expect to say then as now, 'From Copenhagen to Corsör, it is a perfect chain of pearls!'"

NOTE concerning Hagbarth and Signelil, from Thiele, *Danmarks Folkesagn*, vol ii. — "Near Ringsted lies Sigersted, so called after King Sigur, who dwelt there. His daughter Signelil loved a warrior named Habor, or Hagbarth. Once, when she was hunting a stag and followed it over Vrangstrup River, her horse fell under her; then leaped Habor into the water and saved her life, bringing her safe to an island that may be seen in the river to this day Afterward Habor came to Signelil disguised as a damsel, but was soon betrayed to King Sigur by Gunvar, his daughter's nurse. And when all was discovered, and Habor was seized by the King's men, the lovers resolved to die together. Habor was led away to be hanged on a hill; but, wishing to convince himself of Signelil's truth, he begged that his cloak might be suspended on the gallows, before he himself was hanged, saying he wished to see how he should look. In the mean time, his lady-love had flung all her precious things into a deep hole, still called Signelil's Well — whence comes the saying that Sigersted holds more silver and gold than it wots of. She then shut herself up in her bower, and watched the gallows where Habor was to be hanged. And when she saw his cloak suspended, imagining him to be already dead, she set light to her bower, and Habor, seeing it in flames, was assured of her love, and cheerfully offered himself for death. He was buried in Hage Hill. But the false handmaiden had no joy of her treachery, for she was afterward flung into a well, still known as Maiden Well." See also *Danske Viser fra Middelalderen*, and Grimm's *Alt-dänische Heldenlieder*, for divers ballads founded on this, the favorite love-tale for more than a thousand years in Denmark. Saxo Grammaticus relates the story in his history, and in later times Oehlenschläger has written a tragedy on the subject. — *Translator.*

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY THING.

THE one who could do the most extraordinary thing should have the king's daughter and the half of his kingdom.

The young men, yes, the old ones too, strained all their wits, their nerves, and muscles ; two ate themselves to death and one drank himself dead, to do the Most Extraordinary thing most to their liking. But that was not the way it was to be done. The little boys in the street tried to spit on the small of their own backs. That seemed to them the most extraordinary thing to do.

On a certain day there was to be an exhibition of what each had to show as his "Most Extraordinary." Judges were appointed from children of three years up to folks of ninety. It was a grand Exposition of Extraordinary things, but all were soon agreed that the Most Extraordinary was a great hall clock in a case, singularly contrived outside and in. When the clock struck, out came animated figures that showed what hour was struck. It was twelve whole representations, with moving figures that sang and spoke. It surely was the Most Extraordinary thing, said the people.

The clock struck *one*, and Moses stood on the Mount and wrote down on the tables of the law the first great commandment: "There is one only true God." The clock struck *two*, and the Garden of Paradise was seen, with Adam and Eve meeting — two happy people ; without owning so much as a clothes-press they were betrothed. At the stroke of *three*, the Three Holy Kings appeared, only one of them was black as coal: he could not help that, it was the sun that scorched him ; they came bringing incense and precious gifts. When *four* sounded, the Seasons came: Spring with a cuckoo on a budding beech bough ; Summer with a grasshopper on a ripe ear of corn ; Autumn with an empty stork's nest — the birds had flown away ; Winter with an old crow that could tell

stories, perched on the corner of the stove, — old stories of by-gone days. At *five* o'clock, the five senses were seen: Sight came in the shape of a spectacle-maker; Hearing was a copper-smith; Smell sold violets and anemones; Taste was a cook; and Feeling an undertaker, with crape down to his heels. The clock struck *six;* there sat a gamester who threw a die, and it fell the highest side up with sixes on it. Then the *seven* days of the week, or the seven deadly sins, — folks could not tell which, for they heard them all at once, and it was not easy to distinguish them. Then came a choir of monks and sang the *eight* o'clock vesper song. At the stroke of *nine* the Nine Muses came out: one was employed at the astronomical observatory; one at the records room; the rest were at the theatre. When *ten* struck, Moses stepped forth with the tables of the law; thereon were all God's commandments, and they were ten in all. The clock struck again, when small boys and girls sprang dancing out; they played a play and sang a song to it.

"All the way to heaven
The clock has struck eleven."

And that it did strike. Now came the stroke of *twelve,* when the watchman marched out with his heavy cape and morning star;[1] he sang the old watch song, —

"'Twas at the midnight hour
Our Saviour, he was born," —

and while he sang, the roses grew and grew into angels' heads resting on rainbow-hued wings.

It was goodly to hear, it was charming to see. The whole thing was an amazing work of art, the Most Extraordinary thing, said every one. The artist was a young man, good-hearted, child-like, a true friend and help to his poor parents; he was worthy of the princess and the half of the kingdom.

The day for announcing the decision had come, the whole town was dressed up, and the princess sat on the throne of the country that had been newly stuffed with curled hair, but still it had not been made any more comfortable or agreeable.

[1] The popular name for the staff which the watchman used to carry. It is a ponderous club with spikes in the bulging head

The judges round about looked very slyly at him who was to get the prize, and he stood there so happy and proud; his fortune was won, he had done the Most Extraordinary thing.

"Nay, that shall I now do!" suddenly cried out a long-legged working-fellow. "I am the man for the Most Extraordinary thing!" and so he swung a great axe at the work of art. "Crick, crack, crash!" there lay the whole thing. Wheels and feathers flew about. It was a grand ruin. "I could do that!" said the man; "my work has beat his, and knocked you at the same time. I have done the Most Extraordinary thing!"

"Ruined such a work of art!" said the judges; "yes, that was the Most Extraordinary thing." All the people said the same thing, and so he was to have the princess and half the kingdom; for a law is a law, even if it is the most extraordinary thing.

They sounded the trumpets from the ramparts and from all the towers in town: "The nuptials are to be celebrated!" The princess was not particularly pleased at it, but she looked pretty and was most expensively dressed. The church was bright with lights in the evening; it looked best then. The ladies of rank in the town sang in procession, and led the bride; the knights sang, and they accompanied the bridegroom; he strutted as stiffly as if he never could be knocked over.

Now they stopped singing; it was so still that one could have heard a pin drop on the ground; but in the midst of the quiet there was a great noise and a crash; the great church doors flew open, and "boom! boom!" all the works of the clock came marching out through the doorway, and halted between the bride and groom.

Dead men cannot walk again, — that we know very well, — but a work of art can go again! The body was shattered to pieces, but not the spirit; the spirit of art made a joke, and indeed it was no joke!

The work of art stood there as really as when it was whole and untouched. The clock struck one stroke after another, right on to twelve, and the figures crowded out: first Moses, shining as if flame issued from his forehead; he flung the

heavy stone tables of the law at the bridegroom's feet and fastened them to the church floor.

"I cannot lift them again!" said Moses. "You have broken my arms; stand there where you are."

Now came Adam and Eve, the three Wise Men of the East, and the four Seasons; each said his disagreeable truth, "Shame on you!" But he was not ashamed.

All the figures that showed each hour came forth out of the clock, and all grew wondrous big; it was as if there were scarcely room for the real men, and when, at the stroke of twelve, the watchman stepped forth with his great cape and morning star, there was a prodigious confusion. The watchman went straight up to the bridegroom and struck him on the forehead with his morning star.

"Lie there!" said he. "Like for like; now we are revenged and the master too. We vanish!"

And so they did vanish, — the whole of this work of art. But the candles round about in the church grew into great flowers of light, and the gilded stars under the roof sent forth clear streaming light; the organ sounded of itself. All the people said that they had lived to see the Most Extraordinary thing.

"Now do you summon the right one!" said the princess, — "the one that made the work of art; he is to be my lawful husband and lord."

And he stood in the church; the whole people were his train; all were happy, all blessed him, there was no one who was envious; yes, that was the Most Extraordinary thing.

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY THING. See page 205.

UNDER THE WILLOW-TREE.

THE region round the little town of Kjöge is very bleak and bare. The town certainly lies by the sea-shore, which is always beautiful, but just there it might be more beautiful than it is: all around are flat fields, and it is a long way to the forest. But when one is very much at home in a place, one always finds something beautiful, and something that one longs for in the most charming spot in the world that is strange to us. We confess that, by the utmost boundary of the little town, where some humble gardens skirt the streamlet that falls into the sea, it must be very pretty in summer; and this was the opinion of the two children from neighboring houses, who were playing there, and forcing their way through the goosberry bushes to get to one another. In one of the gardens stood an elder-tree, and in the other an old willow, and under the latter especially the children were very fond of playing; they were allowed to play there, though; indeed, the tree stood close beside the stream, and they might easily have fallen into the water. But the eye of God watches over the little ones; if it did not, they would be badly off. And, moreover, they were very careful with respect to the water; in fact, the boy was so much afraid of it, that they could not lure him into the sea in summer, when the other children were splashing about in the waves. Accordingly, he was famously jeered and mocked at, and had to bear the jeering and mockery as best he could. But once Joanna, the neighbor's little girl, dreamed she was sailing in a boat, and Knud waded out to join her till the water rose, first to his neck, and afterward closed over his head, so that he disappeared altogether. From the time when little Knud heard of this dream, he would no longer bear the teasing of the other boys. He might go into the water now, he said, for Joanna had dreamed

it. He certainly never carried the idea into practice, but the dream was his great guide for all that.

Their parents, who were poor people, often took tea together, and Knud and Joanna played in the gardens and on the high-road, where a row of willows had been planted beside the skirting ditch; these trees with their polled tops, certainly did not look beautiful, but they were not put there for ornament but for use. The old willow-tree in the garden was much handsomer, and therefore the children were fond of sitting under it. In the town itself there was a great market-place, and at the time of the fair this place was covered with whole streets of tents and booths, containing silk ribbons, boots, and everything that a person could wish for. There was great crowding, and generally the weather was rainy; but it did not destroy the fragrance of the honey-cakes and the gingerbread, of which there was a booth quite full; and the best of it was, that the man who kept this booth came every year to lodge during the fair-time in the dwelling of little Knud's father. Consequently there came a present of a bit of gingerbread every now and then, and of course Joanna received her share of the gift. But perhaps the most charming thing of all was that the gingerbread dealer knew all sorts of tales, and could even relate histories about his own gingerbread cakes; and one evening, in particular, he told a story about them which made such a deep impression on the children that they never forgot it; and for that reason it is perhaps advisable that we should hear it too, more especially as the story is not long.

"On the shop-board," he said, "lay two gingerbread cakes, one in the shape of a man with a hat, the other of a maiden without a bonnet; both their faces were on the side that was uppermost, for they were to be looked at on that side, and not on the other; and, indeed, most people have a favorable side from which they should be viewed. On the left side the man wore a bitter almond — that was his heart; but the maiden, on the other hand, was honey-cake all over. They were placed as samples on the shop-board, and remaining there a long time, at last they fell in love with one another, but neither told the other, as they should have done if they had expected anything to come of it.

"'He is a man, and therefore he must speak first,' she thought; but she felt quite contented, for she knew her love was returned.

"His thoughts were far more extravagant, as is always the case with a man. He dreamed that he was a real street boy, that he had four pennies of his own, and that he purchased the maiden and ate her up. So they lay on the shop-board for weeks and weeks, and grew dry and hard, but the thoughts of the maiden became ever more gentle and maidenly.

"'It is enough for me that I have lived on the same table with him,' she said, and — crack! — she broke in two.

"'If she had only known of my love, she would have kept together a little longer,' he thought.

"And that is the story, and here they are, both of them," said the baker in conclusion. "They are remarkable for their curious history, and for their silent love, which never came to anything. And there they are for you!" and, so saying, he gave Joanna the man who was yet entire, and Knud got the broken maiden; but the children had been so much impressed by the story that they could not summon courage to eat the lovers up.

On the following day they went out with them to the churchyard, and sat down by the church wall, which is covered, winter and summer, with the most luxuriant ivy as with a rich carpet. Here they stood the two cake figures up in the sunshine among the green leaves, and told the story to a group of other children; they told them of the silent love which led to nothing. It is called *love* because the story was so lovely, — on that they all agreed. But when they turned to look again at the gingerbread pair, a big boy, out of mischief, had eaten up the broken maiden. The children cried about this, and afterward — probably that the poor lover might not be left in the world lonely and desolate — they ate him up too; but they never forgot the story.

The children were always together by the elder-tree and under the willow, and the little girl sang the most beautiful songs with a voice that was as clear as a bell. Knud, on the other hand, had not a note of music in him, but he knew the words of the songs and that at least was something. The people of

Kjöge, even to the rich wife of the fancy shop-keeper, stood still and listened when Joanna sang. "She has a very sweet voice, that little girl," they said.

Those were glorious days, but they could not last forever. The neighbors were neighbors no longer. The little maiden's mother was dead, and the father intended to marry again, in the capital, where he had been promised a living as a messenger, which was to be a very lucrative office. And the neighbors separated regretfully, the children weeping heartily, but the parents promised that they should at least write to one another once a year.

And Knud was bound apprentice to a shoemaker, for the big boy could not be allowed to run wild any longer; and moreover he was confirmed.

Ah, how gladly on that day of celebration would he have been in Copenhagen with little Joanna! but he remained in Kjöge, and had never yet been to Copenhagen, though the little town is only five Danish miles distant from the capital; but far across the bay, when the sky was clear, Knud had seen the towers in the distance, and on the day of his confirmation he could distinctly see the golden cross on the principal church glittering in the sun.

Ah, how often his thoughts were with Joanna! Did she think of him? Yes. Toward Christmas there came a letter from her father to the parents of Knud, to say that they were getting on very well in Copenhagen, and especially might Joanna look forward to a brilliant future on the strength of her fine voice. She had been engaged in the theatre in which people sing, and was already earning some money, out of which she sent her dear neighbors of Kjöge a dollar for the merry Christmas Eve. They were to drink her health, she had herself added in a postscript; and in the same postscript there stood further, "A kind greeting to Knud."

The whole family wept; and yet all this was very pleasant — those were joyful tears that they shed. Knud's thoughts had been occupied every day with Joanna; and now he knew that she also thought of him; and the nearer the time came when his apprenticeship would be over, the more clearly did it appear to him that he was very fond of Joanna, and that

she must be his wife; and when he thought of this, a smile came upon his lips, and he drew the thread twice as fast as before, and pressed his foot hard against the knee-strap. He ran the awl far into his finger, but he did not care for that. He determined not to play the dumb lover, as the two gingerbread cakes had done. The story should teach him a lesson.

And now he was a journeyman, and his knapsack was packed ready for his journey; at length, for the first time in his life, he was to go to Copenhagen, where a master was already waiting for him. How glad Joanna would be! She was now seventeen years old, and he nineteen.

Already in Kjöge he had wanted to buy a gold ring for her; but he recollected that such things were to be had far better in Copenhagen. And now he took leave of his parents, and on a rainy day, late in the autumn, went forth on foot out of the town of his birth. The leaves were falling down from the trees, and he arrived at his new master's in the metropolis wet to the skin. Next Sunday he was to pay a visit to Joanna's father. The new journeyman's clothes were brought forth, and the new hat from Kjöge was put on, which became Knud very well, for till this time he had only worn a cap. And he found the house he sought, and mounted flight after flight of stairs until he became almost giddy. It was terrible to him to see how people lived piled up one over the other in the dreadful city.

Everything in the room had a prosperous look, and Joanna's father received him very kindly. To the new wife he was a stranger, but she shook hands with him, and gave him some coffee.

"Joanna will be glad to see you," said the father; "you have grown quite a nice young man. You shall see her presently. She is a girl who rejoices my heart, and, please God, she will rejoice it yet more. She has her own room now, and pays us rent for it."

And the father knocked quite politely at the door, as if he were a visitor, and then they went in.

But how pretty everything was in that room! such an apartment was certainly not to be found in all Kjöge: the Queen herself could not be more charmingly lodged. There

were carpets, there were window-curtains quite down to the floor, and around were flowers and pictures, and a mirror into which there was almost danger that a visitor might step, for it was as large as a door; and there was even a velvet chair.

Knud saw all this at a glance; and yet he saw nothing but Joanna. She was a grown maiden, quite different from what Knud had fancied her, and much more beautiful. In all Kjöge there was not a girl like her. How graceful she was, and with what an odd unfamiliar glance she looked at Knud! But that was only for a moment, and then she rushed toward him as if she would have kissed him. She did not really do so, but she came very near it. Yes, she was certainly rejoiced at the arrival of the friend of her youth! The tears were actually in her eyes; and she had much to say, and many questions to put concerning all, from Knud's parents down to the elder-tree and the willow, which she called Elder Mother and Willow Father, as if they had been human beings; and indeed they might pass as such, just as well as the gingerbread cakes; and of these she spoke too, and of their silent love, and how they had lain upon the shop-board and split in two — and then she laughed very heartily; but the blood mounted into Knud's cheeks, and his heart beat thick and fast. No, she had not grown proud at all. And it was through her — he noticed it well — that her parents invited him to stay the whole evening with them; and she poured out the tea and gave him a cup with her own hands; and afterward she took a book and read aloud to them, and it seemed to Knud that what she read was all about himself and his love, for it matched so well with his thoughts; and then she sang a simple song, but through her singing it became like a history, and seemed to be the outpouring of her very heart. Yes, certainly she was fond of Knud. The tears coursed down his cheeks — he could not restrain them, nor could he speak a single word: he seemed to himself as if he were struck dumb; and yet she pressed his hand, and said, —

"You have a good heart, Knud — remain always as you are now."

That was an evening of matchless delight to Knud; to sleep after it was impossible, and accordingly Knud did not sleep.

At parting, Joanna's father had said, "Now, you won't forget us altogether! Don't let the whole winter go by without once coming to see us again;" and therefore he could very well go again the next Sunday, and resolved to do so. But every evening when working hours were over — and they worked by candle-light there — Knud went out through the town; he went into the street in which Joanna lived, and looked up at her window; it was almost always lit up, and one evening he could see the shadow of her face quite plainly on the curtain — and that was a grand evening for him. His master's wife did not like his galivanting abroad every evening, as she expressed it, and she shook her head; but the master only smiled.

"He is only a young fellow," he said.

But Knud thought to himself: "On Sunday I shall see her, and I shall tell her how completely she reigns in my heart and soul, and that she must be my little wife. I know I am only a poor journeyman shoemaker, but I shall work and strive — yes, I shall tell her so. Nothing comes of silent love: I have learned that from the cakes."

And Sunday came round, and Knud sallied forth; but, unluckily, they were all invited out for that evening, and were obliged to tell him so. Joanna pressed his hand and said, —

"Have you ever been to the theatre? You must go once. I shall sing on Wednesday, and if you have time on that evening, I will send you a ticket; my father knows where your master lives."

How kind that was of her! And on Wednesday at noon he received a sealed paper, with no words written in it; but the ticket was there, and in the evening Knud went to the theatre for the first time in his life. And what did he see? He saw Joanna, and how charming and how beautiful she looked! She was certainly married to a stranger, but that was all in the play — something that was only make-believe, as Knud knew very well. If it had been real, he thought, she would never have had the heart to send him a ticket that he might go and see it. And all the people shouted and applauded, and Knud cried out "Hurra!"

Even the King smiled at Joanna, and seemed to delight in her. Ah, how small Knud felt! but then he loved her so

dearly, and thought that she loved him too; but it was for the man to speak the first word, as the gingerbread maiden in the child's story had taught him; and there was a great deal for him in that story.

So soon as Sunday came, he went again. He felt as if he were going into a church. Joanna was alone, and received him — it could not have happened more fortunately.

"It is well that you are come," she said. "I had an idea of sending my father to you, only I felt a presentiment that you would be here this evening; for I must tell you that I start for France on Friday: I must go there, if I am to become efficient."

It seemed to Knud as if the whole room were whirling round and round with him. He felt as if his heart would presently burst; no tear rose to his eyes, but still it was easy to see how sorrowful he was.

"You honest, faithful soul!" she exclaimed.

And these words of hers loosened Knud's tongue. He told her how constantly he loved her, and that she must become his wife; and as he said this, he saw Joanna change color and turn pale. She let his hand fall, and answered seriously and mournfully, —

"Knud, do not make yourself and me unhappy. I shall always be a good sister to you, one in whom you may trust, but I shall never be anything more."

And she drew her white hand over his hot forehead.

"Heaven gives us strength for much," she said, "if we only endeavor to do our best."

At that moment the stepmother came into the room; and Joanna said quickly, —

"Knud is quite inconsolable because I am going away. Come, be a man," she continued, and laid her hand upon his shoulder; and it seemed as if they had been talking of the journey and nothing else. "You are a child," she added; "but now you must be good and reasonable, as you used to be under the willow-tree, when we were both children."

But Knud felt as if the whole world had slid out of its course, and his thoughts were like a loose thread fluttering to and fro in the wind. He stayed, though he could not remember if she had asked him to stay; and she was kind and good,

and poured out his tea for him, and sang to him. It had not the old tone, and yet it was wonderfully beautiful, and made his heart feel ready to burst. And then they parted. Knud did not offer her his hand, but she seized it, and said, —

"Surely you will shake hands with your sister at parting, old playfellow!"

And she smiled through the tears that were rolling over her cheeks, and she repeated the word "brother" — and certainly there was good consolation in that — and thus they parted.

She sailed to France, and Knud wandered about the muddy streets of Copenhagen. The other journeymen in the workshop asked him why he went about so gloomily, and told him he should go and amuse himself with them, for he was a young fellow.

And they went with him to the dancing-rooms. He saw many handsome girls there, but certainly not one like Joanna; and here, where he thought to forget her, she stood more vividly than ever before the eyes of his soul. "Heaven gives us strength for a great deal, if we only try to do our best," she had said; and holy thoughts came into his mind, and he folded his hands. The violins played, and the girls danced round in a circle; and he was quite startled, for it seemed to him as if he were in a place to which he ought not to have brought Joanna — for she was there with him, in his heart; and accordingly he went out. He ran through the streets, and passed by the house where she had dwelt; it was dark there, dark everywhere, and empty, and lonely. The world went on in its course, but Knud pursued his lonely way, unheedingly.

The winter came, and the streams were frozen. Everything seemed to be preparing for a burial. But when spring returned, and the first steamer was to start, a longing seized him to go away, far, far into the world, but not to France. So he packed his knapsack, and wandered far into the German land, from city to city, without rest or peace; and it was not till he came to the glorious old city of Nuremberg that he could master his restless spirit; and in Nuremberg, therefore, he decided to remain.

Nuremberg is a wonderful old city, and looks as if it were cut out of an old picture-book. The streets seem to stretch

themselves along just as they please. The houses do not like standing in regular ranks. Gables with little towers, arabesques, and pillars, start out over the pathway; and from the strange peaked roofs water-spouts, formed like dragons or great slim dogs, extend far over the street.

Here in the market-place stood Knud, with his knapsack on his back. He stood by one of the old fountains that are adorned with splendid bronze figures, Scriptural and historical, rising up between the gushing jets of water. A pretty servant-maid was just filling her pails, and she gave Knud a refreshing draught; and as her hand was full of roses, she gave him one of the flowers, and he accepted it as a good omen.

From the neighboring church the strains of the organ were sounding: they seemed to him as familiar as the tones of the organ at home at Kjöge; and he went into the great cathedral. The sunlight streamed in through the stained-glass windows, between the two lofty slender pillars. His spirit became prayerful, and peace returned to his soul.

And he sought and found a good master in Nuremberg, with whom he stayed, and in whose house he learned the German language.

The old moat round the town has been converted into a number of little kitchen gardens; but the high walls are standing yet, with their heavy towers. The rope-maker twists his ropes on a gallery or walk built of wood, inside the town wall, where elder bushes grow out of the clefts and cracks, spreading their green twigs over the little, low houses that stand below; and in one of these dwelt the master with whom Knud worked; and over the little garret window at which Knud sat the elder waved its branches.

Here he lived through a summer and a winter; but when the spring came again he could bear it no longer. The elder was in blossom, and its fragrance reminded him so of home, that he fancied himself back in the garden at Kjöge; and therefore Knud went away from his master, and dwelt with another farther in the town, over whose house no elder bush grew.

His workshop was quite close to one of the old stone bridges, by a low water-mill, that rushed and foamed always.

Without, rolled the roaring stream, hemmed in by houses, whose old decayed gables looked ready to topple down into the water. No elder grew here — there was not even a flower-pot with its little green plant; but just opposite the workshop stood a great old willow-tree, that seemed to cling fast to the house, for fear of being carried away by the water, and which stretched forth its branches over the river, just as the willow at Kjöge spread its arms across the streamlet by the gardens there.

Yes, he had certainly gone from the "Elder Mother" to the "Willow Father." The tree here had something, especially on moonlight evenings, that went straight to his heart — and that something was not in the moonlight, but in the old tree itself.

Nevertheless, he could not remain. Why not? Ask the willow-tree, ask the blooming elder! And therefore he bade farewell to his master in Nuremberg, and journeyed onward.

To no one did he speak of Joanna — in his secret heart he hid his sorrow; and he thought of the deep meaning in the old childish story of the two cakes. Now he understood why the man had a bitter almond in his breast — he himself felt the bitterness of it; and Joanna, who was always so gentle and kind, was typified by the honey-cake. The strap of his knapsack seemed so tight across his chest that he could scarcely breathe; he loosened it, but was not relieved. He saw but half the world around him; the other half he carried about him and within himself. And thus it stood with him.

Not till he came in sight of the high mountains did the world appear freer to him; and now his thoughts were turned without, and tears came into his eyes.

The Alps appeared to him as the folded wings of the earth; how if they were to unfold themselves, and display their variegated pictures of black woods, foaming waters, clouds, and masses of snow? At the last day, he thought, the world will lift up its great wings, and mount upward toward the sky, and burst like a soap-bubble in the glance of the Highest!

"Ah," sighed he, "that the Last Day were come!"

Silently he wandered through the land, that seemed to him

as an orchard covered with soft turf. From the wooden balconies of the houses the girls who sat busy with their lace-making nodded at him ; the summits of the mountains glowed in the red sun of the evening ; and when he saw the green lakes gleaming among the dark trees, he thought of the coast by the Bay of Kjöge, and there was a longing in his bosom, but it was pain no more.

There where the Rhine rolls onward like a great billow, and bursts, and is changed into snow-white, gleaming, cloud-like masses, as if clouds were being created there, with the rainbow fluttering like a loose band above them ; there he thought of the water-mill at Kjöge, with its rushing, foaming water.

Gladly would he have remained in the quiet Rhenish town, but here too were too many elder-trees and willows, and therefore he journeyed on, over the high, mighty mountains, through shattered walls of rock, and on roads that clung like swallows' nests to the mountain-side. The waters foamed on in the depths, the clouds were below him, and he strode on over thistles, Alpine roses, and snow, in the warm summer sun ; and saying farewell to the lands of the North, he passed on under the shade of blooming chestnut-trees, and through vineyards and fields of maize. The mountains were a wall between him and all his recollections ; and he wished it to be so.

Before him lay a great glorious city which they called *Milano*, and here he found a German master who gave him work. They were an old pious couple, in whose workshop he now labored. And the two old people became quite fond of the quiet journeyman, who said little, but worked all the more, and led a pious Christian life. To himself also it seemed as if Heaven had lifted the heavy burden from his heart.

His favorite pastime was to mount now and then upon the mighty marble church, which seemed to him to have been formed of the snow of his native land, fashioned into roofs, and pinnacles, and decorated open halls : from every corner and every point the white statues smiled upon him. Above him was the blue sky, below him the city and the wide-spreading Lombard plains, and toward the north, the high mountains clad with perpetual snow ; and he thought of the church at Kjöge, with its red ivy-covered walls, but he did not long

to go thither: here, beyond the mountains, he would be buried.

He had dwelt here a year, and three years had passed away since he left his home, when one day his master took him into the city, not to the circus where riders exhibited, but to the opera where was a hall worth seeing. There were seven stories, from each of which beautiful silken curtains hung down, and from the ground to the dizzy height of the roof sat elegant ladies, with bouquets of flowers in their hands, as if they were at a ball, and the gentlemen were in full dress, and many of them decorated with gold and silver. It was as bright there as in the brilliant sunshine, and the music rolled gloriously through the building. Everything was much more splendid than in the theatre at Copenhagen, but then Joanna had been there, and — could it be? Yes, it was like magic — she was here also! for the curtain rose and Joanna appeared, dressed in silk and gold, with a crown upon her head: she sang as he thought none but angels could sing, and came far forward, quite to the front of the stage, and smiled as only Joanna could smile, and looked straight down at Knud. Poor Knud seized his master's hand, and called out aloud, "Joanna!" but no one heard but the master, who nodded his head, for the loud music sounded above everything.

"Yes, yes, her name is Joanna," said the master.

And he drew forth a printed playbill, and showed Knud her name — for the full name was printed there.

No, it was not a dream! All the people applauded and threw wreaths and flowers to her, and every time she went away they called her back, so that she was always going and coming.

In the street the people crowded round her carriage, and drew it away in triumph. Knud was in the foremost row, and shouted as joyously as any; and when the carriage stopped before her brilliantly lighted house, Knud stood close beside the door of the carriage. It flew open, and she stepped out: the light fell upon her dear face, as she smiled, and made a kindly gesture of thanks, and appeared deeply moved. Knud looked straight into her face, and she looked into his, but she did not know him. A man with a star glittering on his breast gave

her his arm — and it was whispered about that the two were engaged.

Then Knud went home and packed his knapsack. He was determined to go back to his own home, to the elder and willow-trees — ah, under the willow-tree! A whole life is sometimes lived through in a single hour.

The old couple begged him to remain, but no words could induce him to stay. It was in vain they told him that winter was coming, and pointed out that snow had already fallen in the mountains; he said he could march on, with his knapsack on his back, in the wake of the slow-moving carriage, for which they would have to clear a path.

So he went away toward the mountains, and marched up them and down them. His strength was giving way, but still he saw no village, no house; he marched on toward the north. The stars gleamed above him, his feet stumbled, and his head grew dizzy. Deep in the valley stars were shining too, and it seemed as if there were another sky below him. He felt he was ill. The stars below him became more and more numerous, and glowed brighter and brighter, and moved to and fro. It was a little town whose lights beamed there; and when he understood that, he exerted the remains of his strength, and at last reached the shelter of an humble inn.

That night and the whole of the following day he remained there, for his body required rest and refreshment. It was thawing, and there was rain in the valley. But early on the second morning came a man with an organ, who played a tune of home; and now Knud could stay no longer. He continued his journey toward the north, marching onward for many days with haste and hurry, as if he were trying to get home before all were dead there; but to no one did he speak of his longing, for no one would have believed in the sorrow of his heart, the deepest a human heart can feel. Such a grief is not for the world, for it is not amusing; nor is it even for friends; and moreover he had no friends — a stranger, he wandered through strange ands toward his home in the North.

It was evening. He was walking on the public high road. The frost began to make itself felt, and the country soon became flatter, containing mere field and meadow. By the road-

side grew a great willow-tree. Everything reminded him of home, and he sat down under the tree: he felt very tired, his head began to nod, and his eyes closed in slumber, but still he was conscious that the tree stretched its arm above him; and in his wandering fancy the tree itself appeared to be an old, mighty man — it seemed as if the "Willow Father" himself had taken up his tired son in his arms, and were carrying him back into the land of home, to the bare bleak shore of Kjöge, to the garden of his childhood. Yes, he dreamed it was the willow-tree of Kjöge that had travelled out into the world to seek him, and that now had found him, and had led him back into the little garden by the streamlet, and there stood Joanna, in all her splendor, with the golden crown on her head, as he had seen her last, and she called out "Welcome!" to him.

And before him stood two remarkable shapes, which looked much more human than he remembered them to have been in his childhood: they had changed also, but they were still the two cakes that turned the right side toward him, and looked very well.

"We thank you," they said to Knud. "You have loosened our tongues, and have taught us that thoughts should be spoken out freely, or nothing will come of them; and now something has indeed come of it — we are betrothed."

Then they went hand in hand through the streets of Kjöge, and they looked very respectable in every way: there was no fault to find with *them*. And they went on, straight toward the church, and Knud and Joanna followed them; they also were walking hand in hand; and the church stood there as it had always stood, with its red walls, on which the green ivy grew; and the great door of the church flew open, and the organ sounded, and they walked up the long aisle of the church.

"Our master first," said the cake couple, and made room for Joanna and Knud, who knelt by the altar, and she bent her head over him, and tears fell from her eyes, but they were icy cold, for it was the ice around her heart that was melting — melting by his strong love; and the tears fell upon his burning cheeks, and he awoke, and was sitting under the old willow-tree in the strange land, in the cold wintry evening: an icy hail was falling from the clouds and beating on his face.

"That was the most delicious hour of my life!" he said, "and it was but a dream. O, let me dream again!"

And he closed his eyes once more, and dreamed.

Toward morning there was a great fall of snow. The villagers came forth to go to church, and by the road-side sat a journeyman. He was dead — frozen to death under the willow-tree!

"THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.

IT was in the month of May; the wind was still cold, but trees and bushes, fields and meadows, all proclaimed that spring was come. Flowers sprang forth everywhere, even the hedges were full of them, alive with them, one might say: it seemed as though they were the language wherein Spring announced herself, every single bright blossom a gladsome word of greeting. But the loveliest thing in the hedge was a little apple-tree, and in that tree there was one bough especially fresh and blooming, completely weighed down by its wealth of delicate rosy buds, just ready to open. This bough was so lovely, it could not help knowing it, and therefore it was not one whit surprised when a grand carriage, passing along the road, stopped in front of it, and a young countess sitting in the carriage declared that of all the sweet, bright things of spring, that Apple-bough was the sweetest and brightest of all. And the Apple-bough was broken off, and the young countess held it in her own dainty hand, shading it from the sun with her silk parasol; and then they drove on to her home, a stately castle, full of lofty walls and decorated saloons; where gauzy white curtains fluttered at the open windows, and transparent vases stood full of beautiful flowers, and in one of these, which was carved as it were out of new-fallen snow, the Apple-bough was placed, among fresh, light-green beech leaves, and a pretty sight it was!

And so it came to pass that the Apple-bough grew proud, quite like a human being.

All sorts of people passed through the rooms, and expressed their admiration diversely; some said too much, some said too little, some said nothing at all; and the Apple-bough began to understand that there is a difference between human beings as between vegetables. "Some are for use, some are for ornament, and some could be dispensed with altogether,"

thought the Apple-bough. And as his position at the open window commanded a view over gardens and meadows below, he could look down upon all sorts of flowers and plants, consider, and draw distinctions between them. They stood beneath him all, some rich, some poor, some too poor.

"Miserable, rejected herbs!" quoth the Apple-bough. "It is right and just that a distinction should be made — and yet how unhappy they must feel, if indeed that sort of creature is capable of feeling, like me and my equals; there is indeed a difference, but it must be made, else all would be treated as though they were alike." And the Apple-bough looked down with especial compassion upon one kind of flowers that grew in great multitudes upon the meadows and ditches; no one gathered them for bouquets, — they were too common, they could be found springing up even between the paving-stones, they shot up everywhere, the rankest, most worthless of weeds: they were dandelions, but the lower classes in Denmark have given them the name of "Milk-pails."

"Poor despised outcasts!" went on the Apple-bough; "you cannot help being what you are, so common! and with such a vulgar name! But it is with vegetables as with men, there must be a difference."

"A difference?" repeated the Sunbeam, as it kissed the blossoming Apple-bough, and then flew on to kiss also the golden "Milk-pails" out in the fields. And the Sunbeam's sisters all did the same, kissing all the flowers equally, poor as well as rich.

Now the Apple-bough had never thought about our Lord's infinite love for all that lives and moves in Him, had never thought how much that is good and beautiful can lie hidden, but not forgotten. The Apple-bough had lived with human beings, and grown like them in this.

But the glorious Sunbeam knew better. "You are neither clear nor far-sighted! What is this outcast herb that you are pitying so much?"

"The Milk-pails down there," replied the Apple-bough; "they are never tied up in bouquets, they are trodden under foot, there are too many of them; and when they run to seed they fly about in small bits of wool, and hang upon people's

clothes. Weeds! weeds! but they must be as they are. I am really and truly grateful that I am not as one of them."

And now a whole troop of children roamed over the meadow, the youngest of them so tiny that he had to be carried by the others; and as he was now set down in the grass among the golden blossoms, he laughed for joy, kicked about with his short legs, rolled over and over, and plucked none but the yellow dandelions, which he kissed in his innocent delight. The bigger children busied themselves in breaking the flowers of the dandelions off from their hollow stalks, and joining these stalks into chains, first one for a necklace, then a longer chain to hang across the shoulders and round the waist, and last, a third for a circlet round the head; very soon they stood arrayed in splendid green chains. But the biggest of all the children carefully gathered the stalks bearing crowns of seed — that loose, aërial, woolly blossom, that wonderfully perfect ball of dainty white plumes; they held the white ball to their lips, trying to blow away all the white feathers with one puff of breath; whoever could do that would get new clothes before the year was out — so granny had told them. The poor despised herb was held as a prophet by this generation.

"Do you see now?" asked the Sunbeam; "don't you see its beauty, its power?"

"Yes, for children," replied the Apple-bough.

Presently came into the meadow an old woman. She stooped down and began digging for the dandelion roots with a blunt knife that had lost its handle. Some of the roots she would roast instead of coffee-berries, others she would sell to the apothecary, who valued them as drugs.

"But beauty is something higher," protested the Apple-bough. "Only the chosen few can be admitted into the kingdom of the beautiful; there is a difference among plants as among men."

Then the Sunbeam spoke of the infinite love of the Creator for all His creatures, for all that has life, and His providence watching equally over all.

"Well, that is your opinion," replied the Apple-bough.

Some people now came into the room, among them the

young countess who had placed the Apple-bough in the white vase by the window, and she carried in her hand something that was concealed by three or four large leaves held round it, lest a draught of air should injure it. Was it a flower? it was carried so carefully, more tenderly than the Apple-bough had been, when brought to the castle. Very gently the large leaves were removed, and behold the delicate globe of starry seeds borne by the despised dandelion plant! This it was which she had plucked so cautiously, carried so tenderly, lest one only of the dainty feathered arrows that help to round its globe-like form and sit so lightly, should be blown away. But it was quite perfect, not one seed was lost, and she admired so much the beautiful form, the airy lightness, the wondrous mechanism of a thing destined to be so soon scattered by the wind.

"Only see how wonderfully beautiful our Lord has made it!" she said. "I will put it in a picture together with the Apple-bough: that is very lovely too; but this poor little weed is equally lovely, only in another way. Very different are they, and yet both are children in the kingdom of the beautiful."

And the Sunbeam kissed the poor weed, and then kissed the blossoming Apple-bough, whose delicate petals seemed to blush into a brighter red.

A LEAF FROM THE SKY.

HIGH up yonder, in the thin, clear air, flew an angel with a flower from the heavenly garden. As he was kissing the flower, a very little leaf fell down into the soft soil in the midst of the wood, and immediately took root, and sprouted, and sent forth shoots among the other plants.

"A funny kind of slip that," said the Plants.

And neither Thistle nor Stinging-Nettle would recognize the stranger.

"That must be a kind of garden plant," said they.

And they sneered; and the plant was despised by them as being a thing of the garden.

"Where are you coming?" cried the lofty Thistles, whose leaves are all armed with thorns. "You give yourself a good deal of space. That's all nonsense — we are not here to support you!" they grumbled.

And winter came, and snow covered the plant; but the plant imparted to the snowy covering a lustre as if the sun was shining upon it from below as from above. When spring came, the plant appeared as a blooming object, more beautiful than any production of the forest.

And now appeared on the scene the botanical professor, who could show what he was in black and white. He inspected the plant and tested it, but found it was not included in his botanical system; and he could not possibly find out to what class it belonged.

"That must be some subordinate species," he said. "I don't know it. It 's not included in any system."

"Not included in any system!" repeated the Thistles and the Nettles.

The great trees that stood round about saw and heard it; but they said not a word, good or bad, which is the wisest thing to do for people who are stupid.

There came through the forest a poor innocent girl. Her heart was pure, and her understanding was enlarged by faith. Her whole inheritance was an old Bible; but out of its pages a voice said to her, "If people wish to do us evil, remember how it was said of Joseph. They imagined evil in their hearts, but God turned it to good. If we suffer wrong — if we are misunderstood and despised — then we may recall the words of Him who was purity and goodness itself, and who forgave and prayed for those who buffeted and nailed Him to the cross."

The girl stood still in front of the wonderful plant, whose great leaves exhaled a sweet and refreshing fragrance, and whose flowers glittered like colored flame in the sun; and from each flower there came a sound as though it concealed within itself a deep fount of melody that thousands of years could not exhaust. With pious gratitude the girl looked on this beautiful work of the Creator, and bent down one of the branches toward herself to breathe in its sweetness; and a light arose in her soul. It seemed to do her heart good; and gladly would she have plucked a flower, but she could not make up her mind to break one off, for it would soon fade if she did so. Therefore the girl only took a single leaf, and laid it in her Bible at home; and it lay there quite fresh, always green, and never fading.

Among the pages of the Bible it was kept; and, with the Bible, it was laid under the young girl's head when, a few weeks afterward, she lay in her coffin, with the solemn calm of death on her gentle face, as if the earthly remains bore the impress of the truth that she now stood before her Creator.

But the wonderful plant still bloomed without in the forest. It was almost like a tree to look upon; and all the birds of passage bowed before it.

"That's giving itself foreign airs now," said the Thistles and the Burdocks; "we never behave like that here."

And the black snails actually spat at the flower.

Then came the swineherd. He was collecting thistles and shrubs, to burn them for the ashes. The wonderful plant was placed bodily in his bundle.

"It shall be made useful," he said; and so said, so done.

But soon afterward, the King of the country was troubled with a terrible depression of spirits. He was busy and industrious, but that did him no good. They read him deep and learned books, and then they read from the lightest and most superficial that they could find; but it was of no use. Then one of the wise men of the world, to whom they had applied, sent a messenger to tell the King that there was one remedy to give him relief and to cure him. He said:

"In the King's own country there grows in a forest a plant of heavenly origin. Its appearance is thus and thus. It cannot be mistaken."

"I fancy it was taken up in my bundle, and burned to ashes long ago," said the Swineherd; "but I did not know any better."

"You did not know any better! Ignorance of Ignorances!"

And those words the Swineherd might well take to himself, for they were meant for him, and for no one else.

Not another leaf was to be found; the only one lay in the coffin of the dead girl, and no one knew anything about that.

And the King himself, in his melancholy, wandered out to the spot in the wood.

"Here is where the plant stood," he said; "it is a sacred place."

And the place was surrounded with a golden railing, and a sentry was posted there.

The botanical professor wrote a long treatise upon the heavenly plant. For this he was gilded all over, and this gilding suited him and his family very well. And indeed that was the most agreeable part of the whole story. But the King remained as low-spirited as before; but that he had always been, at least so the sentry said.

CHILDREN'S PRATTLE.

THERE was a large children's party at the merchant's house; rich folks' children and great folks' children were there. The merchant, their host, was a man of sense and education; his father, who had been originally a horse-jockey, but honest and thrifty always, had made a great point of his son's having plenty of book-learning. And book-learning the son had, and a kind heart besides, but of all this there was less talk than of his money. His house was always full of company; some who had "birth," as it is called, and some who had "mind;" some who had both, and some who had neither. But to-day it was a child's party, and among the young visitors was a pretty little girl, most ridiculously proud of her father being a groom of the chamber. The servants had taught her this pride, not her parents; they were far too sensible.

"I am a child of the chamber," she said. And then she informed the other children that she had "birth," and affirmed that people who had not "birth" from the first could not by any means attain it; it was no good reading and being ever so diligent, if you had not "birth." And as for people whose names end with "sen," she declared, "nothing can ever be made of them! One must put out one's arms on each side and keep them at a distance — so!" And with this she arched her delicate little arms with the elbows turned out to show what she meant, — and the little arms were so pretty! She was a sweet little girl.

But the merchant's little daughter was very angry, for her father's name was Madsen, and she knew that that name ended with "sen;" so she rejoined, as proudly as the other, "My father can buy a hundred rix-dollars' worth of sugar-plums and throw them away; can your father afford to do that?"

"Ah, but my father," struck in the little daughter of an author, "can put your father and her father and everybody's father into the newspaper! think of that! Everybody is afraid of him because he directs the newspapers." And the little girl drew herself up as haughtily as if she were a real princess.

Meanwhile, close outside the open door, stood, peeping in through the chink, a poor boy. Such a fellow as he might not come into the room; he had been turning the spit for the cook, and now had got leave to take a peep through the door at the beautifully dressed children who held this conversation. I don't think it could have been much of a pleasure for him.

"I wish I were one of them!" he thought, and when he heard what they said, it made him feel quite low-spirited. Not a penny in the world had his parents; little idea had they of reading a newspaper, far less of writing one; and then, worst of all, his father's name, and consequently his own, ended with "sen." "Nothing in the world could be made of him," he was told. That was sad indeed! and then this "birth" they talked of, what could it mean? had he not been "born," like everybody else?

. . . . . .

Many years passed away; the children were now grown-up men and women.

There now stood in the city a handsome house, full of splendid furniture and beautiful works of art; all people were glad to see it, and would even come from a distance for the purpose. And which of these children was the owner of this house? It is not so easy to guess. Why, the house belonged to the poor boy; he had become somebody, spite of the "sen" at the end of his name — for that name was Thorwaldsen.

And the three little girls — the children of the three aristocracies of birth, of money, and of intellect? Well, something good and pleasant was made out of all three, for all three were good at heart; their silly talk that evening at the party was only Children's Prattle.

THE SWANS' NEST.

BETWEEN the Baltic and the North Sea lies an old Swans' Nest, — it is called Denmark; in it have been born, and will be born hereafter, Swans whose names shall never die.

In the olden time, a flock of Swans flew thence over the Alps to Milan's lovely green plains. There they lighted down and dwelt, for right pleasant was it there to dwell. These Swans were called Lombards.

Another flock, with bright shining plumage, and clear, truthful eyes, lighted down at Byzantium, nestled round the Emperor's throne, and spread out their broad white wings as shields to protect him. These were known as Varangians.

From the coasts of France arose a cry of anguish and terror — terror at the bloody Swans who, with fire under their wings, flew thither from the North. Loud was the prayer of village and town, "God save us from the wild Normans!"

On England's fresh meadow-turf, near the shore, wearing a triple crown on his kingly head, his golden sceptre stretching far over the land, stood the royal Swan, Canute the Dane.

And on Pomerania's shores the heathens bowed the knee, for thither, too, with drawn swords, and bearing the standard of the cross, had flown the Danish Swans.

"But this was in the days of old."

In times nearer our own, then, have mighty Swans been seen to fly out from the Nest. A flash of lightning cleft the air — lightning that shone over all Europe — for a Swan had flapped his strong wings and scattered the twilight mist, and the starry heavens became more visible — were brought, as it were, nearer the earth. The Swan's name was Tycho Brahe.

"Yes, just that once," it will be said; "but now, in our own generation?"

Well, in our own generation we have beheld Swans soaring in a high and glorious flight.

One we saw gently sweep his wings over the golden chords of the harp, whereupon sweet music thrilled through the northern lands, the wild Norwegian mountains lifted their proud crests higher in the full sunlight of the olden time, pine and birch bowed their heads and rustled their leaves, the "Gods of the North" — the heroes and noble women of Scandinavian history — lived and breathed again, their tall, stately figures standing out from the dark background of deep forests.

A second Swan we saw strike his pinions upon the hard marble rock till it cleft asunder, and new forms of beauty, hitherto shut up in the stone, were revealed to the light of day, and the nations of Europe gazed in wonder and admiration at the glorious statuary.

A third Swan we have seen weaving threads of thoughts that spun and spread around the earth, so that words can fly with lightning speed from land to land.

Dear to the protecting heavens above is the old Swans' Nest between the Baltic and the North Sea. Let mighty birds of prey, if they will, speed thither to tear it down. It shall not be! Even the unfledged, unplumed young ones will press forward to the margin of the Nest — we have seen it — will fight desperately with beak and claw, will offer their bleeding breasts in defense of their home.

Centuries will pass away, and Swans will still fly forth from the Nest, and make themselves seen and heard far over the world; long will it be before the time shall come when in sad truth it may be said, "Behold the last Swan! — Listen to the last sweet song from the Swans' Nest!'

PSYCHE.

AT day-dawn, when the clouds to the east are red, shines in the west a large star, the morning-star; her beams quiver upon my white wall, as though she would fain write there the story of all she has witnessed during the thousands of years that she has watched our earth.

Listen now to one of her stories.

Only lately, — for a few centuries ago, though a long time to you men, is but lately to me — thus she begins, — only lately my beams followed a young artist, who lived at Rome. Many things there have changed since that time, but not so much as you may fancy. The imperial city was then, as to this day, a city of ruins; fig-tree and laurel grew among the overturned marble columns and choked up the deserted bath-chambers, with their walls still inlaid with gold and mosaic; the Coliseum was a ruin; the church-bells rang, incense filled the air, processions with lighted candles and canopies passed through the streets. The world's greatest painter, Raphael, then lived at Rome, so did the great sculptor Michael Angelo; the Pope himself admired these two, and honored them with visits. Art was honored and merit rewarded, but not everything good and noble was known and seen then, any more than now.

In a narrow little street stood an old house that had once been a temple; there dwelt a young artist, poor and obscure. To be sure, he had plenty of friends, artists also, who were always telling him he was rich in talent and industry, and that he was a fool in having no more trust in himself. Whatever his hand formed in clay he was sure to break in pieces; he was never satisfied with anything he did, never finished anything, never could earn any money. "You are a dreamer!" they told him. "It is all your own fault, it is because you will not do as we do, and enjoy life, as youth should. Look at Ra-

phael, the great master, whom all the world admires, does he live a life like yours?"

They wanted him to plunge with them into riotous pleasures. But these he turned away from. The "life that Raphael lived," that they were so fond of quoting, seemed to him poor and earthly indeed, when he stood before the great master's pictures, and felt the power of God's holy and heavenly gift; and when he wandered in the Vatican among the noble and beautiful figures that had, so long, long ago, been shaped out of marble, then his breast heaved with delight and longing; he felt within himself some power astir, alike elevating, great, and good, and he yearned to create forms such as these. He went home, and set to work, the soft clay was easily moulded by his fingers, but the next day he was sure to break his work to pieces.

One day he chanced to pass by one of those rich palaces wherewith Rome abounds; he paused at the open portals, and saw galleries, adorned with statues, inclosing a little garden, full of the loveliest roses. In the centre of the rose-garden splashed a fountain, confined in a marble basin, where grew water-plants with large white blossoms and sappy green leaves. Just then a young girl, a daughter of that princely house, glided through the garden, past the fountain; so beautiful she was! so lightly, delicately formed! Surely he had seen her face before; yes, she had been painted as "Psyche," painted by Raphael; yes, in one of the palaces he had seen her portrait, but now he saw herself.

He bore her image away with him in his heart; he returned home, to his poverty-stricken chamber, and there moulded a Psyche in clay; it was the rich, nobly born young daughter of Rome; and for the first time he was satisfied with his work. It had expression and meaning; his ideal was no longer vague and shadowy. And his friends, when they saw his work, were delighted.

Clay is all very well, but it lacks the whiteness and durability of marble; out of the precious block must Psyche receive her life. Nor would this be too costly for the young artist, for a large block had lain in the yard for many years; broken glasses, cabbage-stalks, and remnants of artichoke had been

flung over it time out of mind, and soiled its purity, but within it was white as the mountain-snow. From out this block must Psyche lift her wings.

One day it happened — I must own, the morning-star did not tell me this, for she never saw it, but never mind, I know it — one day a party of high-born Roman nobles visited the young sculptor's humble home. The carriage waited a little apart; the visitors came to inspect the young artist's work, having accidentally heard of it. And who might these distinguished strangers be? Poor young man! or too happy young man, shall we say? The young maiden herself now stood in his room, and how she smiled when her father said, "That is you to the life!" Ah, the smile, the look she then gave the young artist! it cannot be described; it was a look that elevated, ennobled, and alas! crushed him.

"Psyche must be executed in marble," said her father. "When the work is completed I shall buy it," he added.

A new era now began in that poor little workshop. Life and Mirth shone into it, Industry bore them company. The beaming morning-star watched the progress of the work; the clay had become as it were animated, since *she* had been there and had bent in beauty over her own image, with its well-known features. "Now I know what life is," exclaimed the artist; "it is love! it is being lifted above one's self, the rapture of losing one's self in the sense of beauty! What my friends call life and enjoyment is fleeting and unreal as a bubble; they know nothing of the pure heavenly wine that initiates us into life."

The block was brought out, the chisel hewed away huge pieces, measurements were taken, and the work proceeded till gradually the stone became transformed into a human figure, beautiful and perfect as God's image in the young girl. That heavy stone was changed into a form, light, dancing, aërial, a charming Psyche, wearing the smile of celestial innocence that had enshrined her in the young sculptor's heart.

The morning-star watched him and understood all that was stirring in the young man's mind, comprehended the changing color of his cheeks, the kindling in his eyes, whilst he strove to bring out the gift God had bestowed upon him.

"You are like one of the old Greeks!" declared his friends. "Soon will all the world be admiring your Psyche."

"*My* Psyche!" he repeated to himself. "Mine! yes, mine she must be! Therefore am I an artist like the mighty ones that are dead; God has vouchsafed me this gift, in order to raise me to the level of the high-born." And he sank upon his knees, shedding tears of grateful joy, and then again forgot all other thoughts for her, and for her image in marble — for his Psyche that stood there as though carved out of snow, blushing in the morning sun.

And now he must actually see herself, the living, moving Psyche, whose words fell sweet as music; he was to bring her the news that the marble Psyche was completed. He passed through the open court-yard where the fountains splash through the dolphin-forms into the marble basin, where white water-lilies and fresh roses blossom. He entered a lofty antechamber, its walls and ceiling splendid with pictures and coats of arms. Here a troop of retainers, as proud of their fine clothes as sledge-horses of their bells, passed backward and forward; some had even extended their lazy limbs on the carved wooden benches, as much at their ease as though they were the masters of the house. The sculptor told his errand, and was forthwith led up the carpeted marble staircase. Statues stood on either side; he passed through splendid apartments paved with mosaic; the show and glitter around him almost took his breath away. But his courage returned at finding himself kindly, almost cordially received by the stately, courteous old prince, who, after a brief colloquy, bade him pay a visit to the young signorina, his daughter, as she wished to see him. So again he was conducted by the servants through halls and corridors, till he was ushered into the chamber whereof she herself was the chief ornament.

She spoke to him; no solemn church music could ever have greater power to melt the heart, to raise the soul. He took her hand, and pressed it to his lips; no rose-leaf could be softer, but a strong, magical spell seemed to overpower him at that light touch. Words flowed from his lips he never thought to speak, he knew not himself what he spoke; is the volcano conscious when it throws up burning lava? He told

her his love. Astounded, offended, haughty stood she before him ; then an expression of disgust, as though she had unawares touched a wet, clammy reptile, passed into her features ; her cheeks flushed, her lips grew pale, her eyes flashed fire, and yet were dark as night.

"Madman!" she exclaimed. "Away! out of my sight!" and she turned her back to him ; her lovely face at that moment had the look of that fabulous beauty that turned the beholder into stone.

Like one walking in his sleep, he made his way down-stairs, out into the streets, and reached his home. Then came upon him a fit of wild rage and pain ; he seized his hammer, and raised it high, on the point of breaking in pieces his beautiful marble image ; but his friend Angelo, whose presence he in his passion had not perceived, sprang forward, and caught him by the arm, crying, "Are you gone crazy? what is the matter?" They wrestled, but Angelo was the stronger ; drawing a deep breath, the young sculptor threw himself upon a chair.

"What can have happened?" inquired Angelo. "Command yourself ; tell me all about it!" But he would not explain — how could he? So Angelo, putting his own construction upon the matter, lectured him after his usual fashion. He was a dreamer, and would go mad if he did not give up his solitude and his fancies ; why not enjoy life, like his friends? why be like a child, so afraid of doing wrong? etc. And the young sculptor, who had entirely lost his self-command, listened to his friend, and was persuaded to spend an evening in the wild rioting that Angelo called pleasure.

Not till night came, and he reached home and flung himself down upon his bed did he recollect himself. Then his conscience spoke in clear tones of reproof and warning ; he sighed heavily. Back came the memory of his living Psyche's looks and tones when she said, "Away! out of my sight!" After all, was she not right, was he not unworthy to approach her? Weariness came over him, he buried his head in the pillows, and slept.

At daylight he started up, trying to collect his thoughts. Had the whole been a dream — her repulse, Angelo's persua-

sions, his visit to the tavern? No, all were realities, facts hitherto unknown to him, now revealed. The clear morning-star shone through the gray dawn upon the marble Psyche. He felt unworthy to contemplate the symbol of immortality; he got up and drew a curtain over the figure, his own work, which now he could not endure to look upon.

Silent, gloomy, absorbed in reverie, he spent the livelong day; he never inquired what might be stirring without, and no one knew what passed within that lonely human heart.

Days and weeks passed away; the nights were terribly long. The twinkling morning-star at last watched him rise from his bed, pale, and shaking from fever, go up to his marble statue, remove the covering that veiled it from sight, gaze upon his work with one last, sad, yearning look, and then, almost trembling under its weight, drag the statue down into the garden. Here he sought a ruined, dried-up well, or rather hole, and into it he sank his Psyche, flung the mould over it, then heaped up a quantity of dry sticks and nettles about the spot, that no one might observe that the earth had been newly stirred. "Away! out of my sight!" these words sufficed for the brief burial-service. The morning-star looked down through the fresh, cool air, and her beams quivered upon two tears that trembled on the young man's pale cheeks.

He went back to his bed, staggering and faint. He lay there for days and weeks, fever-stricken, sick almost unto death.

During his illness he had a constant visitor from a neighboring convent; Brother Ignatius came to see him day after day as physician, nurse, and friend. He brought the consolations of religion, spoke of man's sin and Heaven's forgiveness; and his words fell like warm summer rain on a thirsty ground. When the young sculptor rose up from his bed of sickness, he had resolved to begin a new life; his art exposed him to vanity, the world was full of temptation, he would renounce both, and seek shelter and safety in a monastery. Brother Ignatius supported him in this resolution, and he became a monk.

Very kindly, very cordially, was he received by the community; the day of his taking the vows was kept as a high

festival. And when, in the evening hour, at sunset, he stood in his little cell, opened his window, and looked out over old Rome, its ruined temples, its wonderful, but dead Coliseum, saw the acacias with their spring blossoms, the evergreens' fresh shoots, the roses in their luxuriant beauty, the nodding citron and orange-trees, and fan-like palms, he felt thrilled with a calm happiness he had never known before. And the wide Campagna, so still and peaceful, extending as far as the solemn, snow-covered mountains, that looked as though painted upon the sky — the whole landscape in its quiet beauty seemed a floating dream.

But the cloister-life is a life of years, long, and monotonous; and the silence and quiet that seemed like Heaven at first became wearisome; and temptation, he found, came from within, rather than from without him. He longed to practice again the art that had been so dear to him; he held this longing a sin, and punished his body for it, but that availed him not. The morning-star still watched him in his cell, knew his struggles, his sufferings; the star that shall assuredly some day pale, and become quenched, whilst the souls that it now watches live and shine immortally, — that star saw his mortal life fade away, watched his weary eyes grow dim in death.

He was buried in earth that had been brought from Jerusalem, mingled with the dust of the pious dead. Some years later, the bones were taken out, a rosary was placed in the fleshless hands, and the skeleton was set up in a niche, among other like ghastly forms, as is the wont in convent grave-yards, to make room for the new-comers. And the sun shone down on the grisly spectacle.

Three centuries had passed away. The bright star of the morning shone still, undiminished in size or lustre; the clouds of dawn were brilliant as ever, fresh as roses, red as blood.

A stately convent now occupied the ground once covered by the little narrow street with its ruined temple. It chanced that a young novice, one of the inmates of this convent, was dead, and her grave was dug in the garden at early dawn. The spade struck against a stone, it seemed; something of dazzling whiteness gleamed forth — it was white marble, rounded into the form of a shoulder; the spade was guided

with greater care; a woman's head was uncovered, then butterfly-wings. Out of the earth stirred to make room for the corpse of the young nun was lifted forth into the rosy morning light a lovely Psyche form, chiseled out of white marble. "How beautiful it is! how perfect! a work of some great master!" folk said. But whose work could it be? No one could tell, no one knew anything about the matter save the clear, bright star that had glistened for so many ages; she had witnessed his earthly life, his sufferings, his weakness.

The sculptor's body had long since returned to its native dust, but the work in which God's gracious gift to him had found its expression — the work on which he had lavished the treasures of his heart and soul — that work remained, lived still, to be known, admired, and loved by a generation who had never heard his name.

And the bright morning-star, from her throne in the sky, sent down her twinkling rays upon Psyche, upon the innocent smile that parted her lips, and in the kindling eyes of the admiring crowd, who gathered round to gaze on that glorious symbol of the immortal soul.

THE OLD GRAVE-STONE.

IN one of our small trading towns, at that time of year when folk say "The evenings grow long," a whole family was assembled together. The air was still mild and warm; the lamp was lighted, the long curtains hung down before the windows, and bright moonlight prevailed without. They were talking about a big old stone that lay down in the yard, close by the kitchen door, where the servants often placed the kitchen utensils, after they had been cleaned, to dry in the sun, and where the children were fond of playing; it was, in fact, an old grave-stone.

"Yes," said the master of the house, "I believe it comes from the old ruined convent-chapel; pulpit and grave-stones, with all their epitaphs, were sold; my late father bought several of these; the others were broken into paving-stones, but this one was left unused, lying in the yard."

"It is easy to know it for a grave-stone," said the eldest of the children. "You can still see on it an hour-glass and a piece of an angel, but the inscription is almost quite worn out, except the name 'Preben,' and a capital 'S' a little farther on, and underneath it 'Martha,' but it is impossible to make out any more, and that you can only read after it has been raining, or when we have washed it."

"Why, then, it must be the grave-stone of Preben Swan and his wife!" exclaimed an old man, who by his age might appear the grandfather of everybody in the room. "To be sure, they were among the last that were buried in the old convent church-yard — the grand old couple! Everybody knew them, everybody loved them; they were like king and queen in the town. Folk said they had more than a barrelful of gold, and yet they went about simply clad, in the coarsest cloth, only their linen was always of dazzling whiteness. Yes, that was a charming old pair, Preben and Martha. One was

always so glad to see them, sitting together on the bench at the top of their stone staircase, under the old lime-tree's shade. They were so good to the poor! they feasted them, clothed them, and there was good sense and a true Christian spirit in all their benevolence. The wife died first; I remember the day quite well; I was then a little boy, and went with my father to see old Preben: the old man was so grieved, he cried like a child. The corpse still lay in her bedroom, close to the chamber where we sat; she looked as if she had just fallen asleep. And the old man told my father how he should now be so lonely, how many years they had spent together, and how they had first made acquaintance and came to love each other. As I said before, I was a child, but it moved me strangely to listen to the old man, and watch how he grew more animated as he went on speaking, a faint color coming into his cheeks as he talked of their youthful days, how pretty she had been, how many little innocent tricks he had played, in order to meet her. And when he spoke of his wedding-day his eyes quite sparkled; he seemed to be living his happy time over again — and all the while she was lying dead in the next chamber, an old lady, and he was an old man — ah, how time passes! I was a child then, and now I am as old as Preben Swan. Yes, time and change come to all. I remember as well as possible the funeral-day, and Preben Swan following the coffin. They had had their grave-stone carved with names and inscriptions, all except the dates of their death, some years before; that same evening the stone was taken to the grave, and put into its place. The next year the grave had to be reopened, and old Preben rejoined his wife. They did not turn out to be so rich as people had fancied, and what they did leave went to distant relations very far off. The old wooden house, with the bench at the top of the high stone staircase under the lime-tree, was ordered to be pulled down, for it was too ruinous to stand any longer. And afterward, when the convent-chapel and cemetery were destroyed, the grave-stone of Preben and Martha was sold, like others, to whomsoever chose to buy it. And so now it lies in the yard for the little ones to roll over, and to make a shelf for the kitchen pots and pans. And the paved street

now covers the resting-place of old Preben and his wife, and nobody thinks of them any more."

And the old man who related all this shook his head sadly. "Forgotten! All things are forgotten!"

And the rest began to speak of other matters; but the youngest boy, a child with large, grave eyes, crept up on a chair behind the curtains, and looked out into the yard, where the moon shone brightly on the big stone that before had seemed to him flat and uninteresting enough, but now had become to him like a page of a large-sized story-book. For all that the boy had heard concerning Preben and his wife, the stone seemed to contain within it; and he looked first at the stone, and then at the brilliant moon, which looked to him like a bright kind face looking down through the pure still air upon the earth.

"Forgotten! all shall be forgotten!" these words came to his ears from the room; but at that very moment an invisible angel kissed the boy's forehead and softly whispered, "Keep the seed carefully, keep it till the time for ripening. Through thee, child as thou art, shall the half-erased inscription, the crumbling grave-stone, stand out in clear, legible characters for generations to come! Through thee shall the old couple again walk arm-in-arm through the ancient gateways, and sit with smiling faces on the bench under the lime-tree, greeting rich and poor. The good and the beautiful perish never; they live eternally in tale and song."

THE COMET.

NOW the comet came with its shining nucleus and its nebulous tail. At the great castle they gazed at it, and from the poor shanty; the crowd in the street stared at it, and the solitary man, that went his way over the pathless heath. Every one had his own thoughts. "Come and look at the vault of heaven; come out and look at the wonderful sight," they cried, and all hastened to look. But inside the room there sat yet a little boy and his mother. The tallow candle was burning, and the mother thought that there was a moth in the light; the tallow formed in ragged edges around the candle, and ran down the sides; this, she believed, betokened that her son should die very soon, — the shining little moth was turning toward him.

This was an old superstition in which she believed. The little boy was destined to live many years here on earth, and, indeed, lived to see the comet again, when it returned sixty years after.

The boy did not see the candle-moth in the light, and thought not of the comet, which then, for the first time in his life, looked brightly down from the skies. He sat quietly with an earthen dish before him; the dish being filled with soap-water, in which he dipped the head of a clay pipe, and then put the stem in his mouth, and made soap-bubbles, big and small. They quivered and fluttered in their beautiful colors; they changed from yellow to red, from red to purple and blue; then they colored green, like the leaves when the sun is shining through them. "May God give thee many years to live here on earth, as many as the bubbles thou art blowing."

"So many, so many!" cried the little fellow. "I can never blow all the soap-water into bubbles. There flies one year, there flies another!" exclaimed he, when a new bubble

broke loose from the pipe and flew off. Some of them flew into his eyes: they burned and smarted, and caused tears to flow. In every bubble he saw a picture of the future, glimmering and glittering.

"This is the time to see the comet!" exclaimed the neighbors; "come out of doors, and don't sit in the room."

And the mother took the boy by the hand; he had to lay the clay pipe aside, and leave his play with the soap-bubbles; the comet was there.

And the boy saw the brilliant fire-ball, and the shining tail. Some said it was three yards long, others insisted it was several millions of yards long, — only a slight difference.

Most of the people who had said that, were dead and gone when the comet came again; but the little fellow, toward whom the candle-moth had been turned, of whom the mother thought, "He will die soon," he still lived, had become old and white-haired. "White hairs are the flower of old age," says the proverb; and he had a good many of such flowers. He was now an old school-master. The school-children said that he was very wise, and knew so very much; he knew history, and geography, and all that was known about heaven and its stars.

"Everything comes again," said he; "only pay attention to persons and events, and you will learn that they always return; there may be a hundred years between, or many hundred years, but then we shall have the same persons again, only in another coat, and in another country." And the school-master told them about William Tell, who was compelled to shoot an apple from his son's head; but before he shot the arrow, he hid another one in his bosom, to shoot into the breast of the wicked Gesler. This took place in Switzerland. But many years before that happened, the same event occurred in Denmark with Walraloke; he was also obliged to shoot an apple from his son's head, and he also hid an arrow in his bosom, to avenge the cruelty. And several thousand years before that, the same story was written down in Egypt. This is a story, and a true one; it came again, and will come again, like the comet, that returns, "flies away through space, stays away, but returns." And he spoke of

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the comet that was expected, the same comet that he had seen when yet a boy.

The school-master knew what took place in the skies, but he did not therefore forget history and geography. His garden was laid out in the shape of a map of Denmark. Here were herbs and flowers, which belong to different parts of the land.

"Fetch me herbs," said he, and they went to the bed that represented Laaland; "fetch me buckwheat," and they went to Langeland. The beautiful blue gentian was found in Skagen. The shining Christ-thorn, at Silkeborg. Towns and cities were marked with images. Here stood St. Knud, with the dragon, which meant Odense; Absalon, with the Bishop's staff, meant Sorö. The old boat with the oars was a sign that there stood Aarhuus. From the school-master's garden you could learn the geography of Denmark; but one had to be instructed by him first, and that was a great pleasure.

Now the comet was expected again, and of that he spoke; and he related what people had said in the olden times, when it appeared last; they had said that a comet year was a good wine year, and that one could mix water with that wine, without its being detected. Therefore the merchants thought so much of a comet year.

The sky was overcast for two weeks, they could not see the comet, and yet it was there. The old school-master sat in his little chamber adjoining the school-room. The old Bornholm clock of his grandfather's time stood in the corner; the heavy lead weights did neither ascend nor descend, the pendulum did not move. The little cuckoo, that used to come forward in past times to cuckoo the passing hours, had for many years ceased to do his duty. Everything was dumb and silent; the clock was out of order.

But the old clavichord near by, made in his father's time, had yet a spark of life left. The strings could yet ring; true, they were a little hoarse, but they could ring the melodies of a whole life-time. With these, the old man remembered so much, both joyful and sorrowful, that had happened in the long series of years that had passed by since he, a little boy, saw the comet; and now, when that comet had come again,

he remembered what his mother had said about the moth in the light; he remembered the beautiful soap-bubbles that he blew, each of them representing a year of his life, as he had said, shining and sparkling in wonderful hues. He saw in them all his pleasures and sorrows, everything beautiful and sorrowful. He saw the child and its plays, the youth and his fancies, the whole world, in wavy brightness, opening before his gazing eyes; and in that sunlight he saw his future grow. These were the bubbles of coming time; now, an old man, he heard from the clavichord's strings the melodies of passing time, mind's bubbles, with memory's variegated colors. And he heard his nurse's knitting song, —

"For sure no Amazone
Did ever stockings knit."

And then the strings sang the song the old papa of the house was wont to sing to him, when a child, —

"In truth full many dangers
Will grow up here below,
For him, that yet is young,
And doth not fully know."

Now the melodies of the first ball were ringing the minuet and molinasky; then the melancholy notes of the flute passed by: bubble after bubble they hurried on, very much like those that he blew with soap-water, when a little boy.

His eyes were turned toward the window: a cloud in the sky was gliding by, and, as it passed, revealed the comet to his gaze, the sparkling nucleus, the shining tail.

It seemed as if it had been only the evening of yesterday that he had seen that comet, and yet a whole eventful life-time lay between that evening and this. Then he was a child, and looked through the bubbles into the future; now the bubbles pointed back in the past.

Once more he had a child's feeling and a child's trust; his eyes sparkled, and his hands sank down upon the keys. There came a sound as of the breaking of a string.

"Come out and see!" shouted the neighbors; "the comet is here, and the sky is so clear; come out and look!"

The old school-master answered not; he had gone where

he should see more clearly: his soul was upon a journey far greater than the comet's, and into a wider space than the comet has to fly through.

And the comet was again seen from the rich castle, and from the poor shanty; the crowd in the street gazed at it, and the solitary man that walked through the pathless heath. But the school-master's soul was seen by God, and the dear ones that had preceded, and whom he so much longed for

FROM A WINDOW IN VARTOU.

LOOKING toward the green rampart that runs round Copenhagen stands a large red house with numerous windows, which are garnished with balsams and green trees; the rooms within are bare and poverty-stricken, and poor old folk inhabit them. The place is called Vartou.

Look! an old maid is leaning out from one window, plucks off the withered leaves from her balsams, and looks out upon the green rampart, where merry children are rolling and tumbling; what can she be thinking of? A whole life-drama moves before her mind's eye.

The poor children, how merrily they play! what red cheeks, what bright eyes! little reck they that they have neither shoes nor stockings. There they dance, on the very same green mound where, as tradition tells, many years back, because the earth always sunk, an innocent child was enticed with flowers and playthings into its open grave, which was walled up while the little one played and feasted.[1] Then the rampart grew

[1] "When, long ago, a rampart was raised round Copenhagen, it kept sinking and sinking, and it seemed impossible to make it firm. At last they took an innocent little girl, set her upon a chair, with a table before her, and gave her toys and sweetmeats, and then, whilst the little one sat amusing herself, twelve masons built up an arch over her, and, that completed, flung over it, amid music and shouting, the earth for the rampart, which from that time has been immovable." Thiele, *Danmarks Folkesager*, vol. i. p. 147.

Nor was this cruel superstition confined to Denmark. Heinrich Heine says, "In the Middle Ages prevailed, popularly, a notion that whenever any building had to be erected, some living creature must be slain, and the foundation stone raised upon its blood; this would make the building firm and durable. . . . . And in numerous legends and songs we find how children or animals were slaughtered for this purpose." The Servians have a ballad on the founding of Scutari, telling how workmen had labored for six years at building the castle, and still the Vila — a Servian fairy — destroyed every night the work of the day; at last she tells King Mokaschin that if

firm and soon wore a garment of fair green turf. But the children have never heard the legend, else they would hear the poor betrayed little one still crying from beneath the mould, and the dew on the grass would seem to them like burning tears. Neither have they heard the history of that king of Denmark who, when the enemy lay encamped round the city, rode past this spot, and swore he would die in his nest; or how women and men came together and poured boiling water upon the white-clad foeman as they crawled up the outer side of the rampart, amid the snow.

Merrily play the little ones; neither they, nor the old maid watching them, think on these things.

Play, thou pretty maiden, play! the years pass quickly; soon comes the blessed, solemn time, when the candidates for Confirmation walk together, hand in hand, and thou among them, clad in a white robe that has cost thy mother much time and work, to make it out of her own dress of long ago. Thou shalt have a red shawl too; it is far too big for thee, but at least every one can see how big it is! Thou thinkest now upon thy dress, now upon the goodness of the kind Father in heaven who has called thee to be His child. And pleasant is it to have a whole

he wants the walls to stand, he must build up within them either his own wife or the wife of one of his two brothers. The bride of the youngest, coming with her basket on the morrow with provisions for the workmen, is thus sacrificed.

> "And beams they drew, and stones they drew, and higher, higher still
> The wall above her girdle grew, ere once she dreamt of ill."

The poor lady entreats that a little window might be left in the wall, so that her baby might be brought to her every day, for her to nurse him, and her request is granted.

> "And yet once more she called on him" (the king) "and whispered in his ear,
> 'The wall is at my face. O leave a little window here, —
> A little window, for the love of God that sits on high,
> That I might see mine own white house until the hour I die;
> A little window, brother dear, that I the child may see,
> Both when he hither comes, and when they bear him home from me.'
> And like a brother once again he her petition took,
> And left a window, that she still upon her home might look, —
> That she might have the light of God to see her infant still,
> Both coming and returning home when he had sucked his fill."

The child was thus nursed by his mother, the ballad tells us, for a whole year though only during the first week could the poor lady's voice be heard through the opening in the wall. — *Translator.*

noliday, and a walk on the green rampart after service-time. And the years pass on; many dark days come, but youth is hopeful, and thou hast won a new friend thou knowest not how. You meet, you ramble together on the rampart in early spring, while the church-bells ring out the solemn festivals: there are no violets in blossom yet, but just outside Rosenborg you find a tree decked with the first green buds of spring; there you pause. Every year that tree throws out fresh green shoots; so does not the human heart, and heavier and darker clouds pass over the mind of man than ever the northern skies have known. Poor child; thy bridal chamber is a coffin, and thou shalt be an old maid; from Vartou shalt thou look out through the balsam blossoms, watch the children at play; and see thy history repeated.

This is the life drama that unfolds its course before the eyes of the old maid who looks out on the ramparts, while the sun shines, and the merry red-cheeked children without shoes or stockings sing and sport, like the free birds of the air.

"GOOD-FOR-NOTHING."

THE sheriff stood at the open window; he wore ruffles, and a dainty breast-pin decorated the front of his shirt; he was neatly shaven, and a tiny little strip of sticking-plaster covered the little cut he had given himself during the process.

"Well, my little man?" quoth he.

The "little man" was no other than the laundress's son, who respectfully took off his cap in passing. His cap was broken in the rim, and adapted to be put into the pocket on occasion; his clothes were poor, but clean, and very neatly mended, and he wore heavy wooden shoes. He stood still when the sheriff spoke, as respectfully as though he stood before the king.

"Ah, you're a good boy, a well-behaved boy!" said the Sheriff. "And so your mother is washing down at the river; *she* isn't good for much. And you're going to her, I see. Ah, poor child! — well, you may go."

And the boy passed on, still holding his cap in his hand, while the wind tossed to and fro his waves of yellow hair. He went through the street, down a little alley to the brook, where his mother stood in the water, at her washing-stool, beating the heavy linen. The water-mill's sluices were opened, and the current was strong; the washing-stool was nearly carried away by it, and the laundress had hard work to strive against it.

"I am very near taking a voyage," she said, "and it is so cold out in the water; for six hours have I been standing here. Have you anything for me?" — and the boy drew forth a phial, which his mother put to her lips. "Ah, that is as good as warm meat, and it is not so dear. O, the water is so cold — but if my strength will but last me out to bring you up honestly, my sweet child!"

At that moment approached an elderly woman, poorly clad,

blind of one eye, lame on one leg, and with her hair brushed into one large curl to hide the blind eye — but in vain, the defect was only the more conspicuous. This was "Lame Maren," as the neighbors called her, a friend of the washerwoman's. "Poor thing, slaving and toiling away in the cold water! it is hard that you should be called names," — for Maren had overheard the sheriff speaking to the child about his own mother, — "hard that your boy should be told you are good-for-nothing."

"What! did the sheriff really say so, child?" said the Laundress, and her lips quivered. "So you have a mother who is good-for-nothing! Perhaps he is right, only he should not say so to the child — but I must not complain, for good things have come to me from that house."

"Why yes, you were in service there once, when the sheriff's parents were alive, many years since. There is a grand dinner at the sheriff's to-day," went on Maren; "it would have been put off, though, had not everything been prepared. I heard it from the porter. News came in a letter, an hour ago, that the sheriff's younger brother, at Copenhagen, is dead."

"Dead!" repeated the Laundress, and she turned as white as a corpse.

"What do you care about it?" said Maren. "To be sure, you must have known him, since you served in the house."

"Is he dead? he was the best, the kindest of creatures! indeed, there are not many like him," and the tears rolled down her cheeks. "O, the world is turning round, I feel so ill!" and she clung to the washing-stool for support.

"You are ill, indeed!" cried Maren. "Take care, the stool will overturn. I had better get you home at once."

"But the linen?"

"I will look after that — only lean on me. The boy can stay here and watch it till I come back and wash what is left; it is not much."

The poor laundress's limbs trembled under her. "I have stood too long in the cold water; I have had no food since yesterday. O, my poor child!" and she wept.

The boy cried too, as he sat alone beside the brook, watching the wet linen. Slowly the two women made their way up the little alley and through the street, past the sheriff's house. Just as she reached her humble home, the laundress fell down on the paving-stones, fainting. She was carried up-stairs and put to bed. Kind Maren hastened to prepare a cup of warm ale — that was the best medicine in this case, she thought — and then went back to the brook and did the best she could with the linen.

In the evening she was again in the laundress's miserable room. She had begged from the sheriff's cook a few roasted potatoes and a little bit of bacon, for the sick woman. Maren and the boy feasted upon these, but the patient was satisfied with the smell of them — that, she declared, was very nourishing.

Supper over, the boy went to bed, lying crosswise at his mother's feet, with a coverlet made of old carpet-ends, blue and red, sewed together.

The Laundress now felt a little better; the warm ale had strengthened her, the smell of the meat done her good.

"Now, you good soul," said she to Maren, "I will tell you all about it, whilst the boy is asleep. That he is already; look at him, how sweetly he looks with his eyes closed; he little thinks how his mother has suffered. May he never feel the like! Well, I was in service with the sheriff's parents when their youngest son, the student, came home; I was a wild young thing then, but honest — that I must say for myself. And the student was so pleasant and merry, a better youth never lived. He was a son of the house, I only a servant, but we became sweethearts — all in honor and honesty — and he told his mother that he loved me; she was like an angel in his eyes, so wise, kind, and loving! And he went away, but his gold ring of betrothal was on my finger. When he was really gone, my mistress called me in to speak to her; so grave, yet so kind she looked, so wisely she spoke, like an angel, indeed. She showed me what a gulf of difference in tastes, habits, and mind lay between her son and me. 'He sees you now to be good-hearted and pretty, but will you always be the same in his eyes? You have not been educated

as he has been; intellectually you cannot rise to his level. I honor the poor,' she continued, 'and I know that in the kingdom of heaven many a poor man will sit in a higher seat than the rich; but that is no reason for breaking the ranks in this world, and you two, left to yourselves, would drive your carriage full tilt against all obstacles till it toppled over with you both. I know that a good honest handicraftsman, Erik, the glove-maker, has been your suitor; he is a widower without children, he is well off; think whether you cannot be content with him.' Every word my mistress spoke went like a knife through my heart, but I knew she was right; I kissed her hand, and shed such bitter tears! But bitterer tears still came when I went into my chamber and lay upon my bed. O, the long, dreary night that followed! Our Lord alone knows what I suffered. Not till I went to church on Sunday did a light break upon my darkness. It seemed providential that as I came out of church I met Erik the glove-maker. There were no more doubts in my mind; he was a good man, and of my own rank. I went straight to him, took his hand, and asked, 'Art thou still in the same mind toward me?' — 'Yes, and I shall never be otherwise minded,' he replied. — 'Dost thou care to have a girl who likes and honors thee, but does not love thee?' — 'I believe love will come,' he said, and so he took my hand. I went home to my mistress; the gold ring that her son had given me, that I wore all day next my heart, and on my finger at night in bed, I now drew forth; I kissed it till my mouth bled, I gave it to my mistres, and said that next week the bans would be read for me and the glove-maker. My mistress took me in her arms and kissed me; she did not tell me I was good-for-nothing; I was good for something then, it seems, before I had known so much trouble. The wedding was at Candlemastide, and our first year all went well; my husband had apprentices, and you, Maren, helped me in the housework"

"O, and you were such a good mistress!" exclaimed Maren. "Never shall I forget how kind you and your husband were to me."

"Ah, you were with us during our good times! We had no children then. The student I never saw again — yes, once

I saw him, but he did not see me. He came to his mother's funeral; I saw him standing by her grave, looking so sad, so ashy pale — but all for his mother's sake. When afterward his father died, he was abroad and did not come to the funeral. Nor has he been here since; he is a lawyer, that I know, and he has never married. But he thought no more of me, and had he seen me, he would certainly have never recognized me, so ugly as I am now. And it is right it should be so."

Then she went on to speak of the bitter days of adversity, when troubles had come upon them in a flood. They had five hundred rix-dollars, and as in their street a house could be bought for two hundred, it was considered a good investment to buy it, take it down, and build it anew. The house was bought; masons and carpenters made an estimate that one thousand and twenty rix-dollars more would be required. Erik arranged to borrow this sum from Copenhagen, but the ship that was to bring him the money was lost, and the money with it. "It was just then that my sweet boy, who lies sleeping here, was born. Then his father fell sick; for three quarters of a year I had to dress and undress him every day. We went on borrowing and borrowing; all our things had to be sold, one by one; at last Erik died. Since then I have toiled and moiled for the boy's sake, have gone out cleaning and washing, done coarse work or fine, whichever I could get; but I do everything worse and worse; my strength will never return any more; it is our Lord's will! He will take me away, and find better provision for my boy."

She fell asleep. In the morning she seemed better, and fancied she was strong enough to go to her work again. But no sooner did she feel the cold water than a shivering seized her, she felt about convulsively with her hands, tried to step forward, and fell down. Her head lay on the dry bank, but her feet were in the water of the brook, her wooden shoes were carried away by the stream. Here she was found by Maren.

A message had been taken to her lodging that the sheriff wanted her, had something to say to her. It was too late; the poor washerwoman was dead. The letter that had brought

the sheriff news of his brother's death also gave an abstract of his will; among other bequests he had left six hundred rix-dollars to the glove-maker's widow, who had formerly served his parents. "There was some love-nonsense between my brother and her," quoth the Sheriff. "It is all as well she is out of the way; now it will all come to the boy, and I shall apprentice him to honest folk who will make him a good workman." For whatever the sheriff might do, were it ever so kind an action, he always spoke harshly and unkindly. So he now called the boy to him, promised to provide for him, and told him it was a good thing his mother was dead; she was good-for-nothing!

She was buried in the paupers' church-yard. Maren planted a little rose-tree over the grave; the boy stood by her side the while.

"My darling mother!" he sighed, as the tears streamed down from his eyes. "It was not true that she was good-for-nothing!"

"No, indeed!" cried her old friend, looking up to heaven. "Let the world say she was good-for-nothing; our Lord in his heavenly kingdom will not say so."

TWO MAIDENS.

DO you know what I mean by "a Maiden?" I mean, what our paviors call "a maiden;" a thing used to ram down the paving-stones with. This sort of maiden is made of wood; it is broad at one end, with iron hoops round it, and at the upper, narrower end a stick is run through it, thus supplying the maiden with arms.

Two such maidens once stood in a yard, among shovels, measuring-tapes, and wheelbarrows. Now a report had been spread that the maidens were to be called no longer "maidens," but "hand-rammers," or "stamps." This report was extremely displeasing to them; on no account would they consent to give up their good old name.

"A maiden is a person, a human being," they declared, "but 'stamps' and 'hand-rammers' are things, and among things will we not be reckoned."

"My betrothed has a right to object," observed the younger of the two, who was betrothed to a ramming-block, that is to say, a large machine used in driving stakes into the ground — doing, in fact, on a larger scale the same sort of work that "the maiden" does on a smaller. "As 'a maiden' he is willing to take me, but probably not as a thing, and therefore I cannot consent to their changing my name."

"For my part, I would sooner have my two arms wrenched off!" protested the elder.

But the wheelbarrow was of an opposite opinion, and the wheelbarrow, considering itself as a one-wheeled carriage, was entitled to respect. "Let me remind you that to be called 'maidens' is common enough, not near so distinctive a name as 'stamp,' for that has some connection with 'signet' and 'seal;' and only think of the 'royal signet,' the 'seal of the law,' and such-like glorious phrases! In your place I would give up the name maiden.'"

"Never! I am too old to change!" declared the elder.

"You do not seem to understand what is called the European necessity," said the honest old measuring-tape. "People have to subject themselves, limit themselves, give in to the exigencies of the times; and if it is now regulated that the maidens are to be called by a new name, by that new name they must be called. There is a measuring-tape for everything."

"Then," said the youngest, "if changes must be, I would rather be called 'missy,' for a 'missy' is still a 'maiden.'"

"But I would rather be chopped up for fire-wood than change at all!" insisted the elder.

It was now time for work; the maidens were placed on the wheelbarrow, as usual, which was respectful treatment, but 'maidens' they were called no longer.

"Maid—!" cried they, as they stamped upon the paving-stones; "Maid—!" they began, but they did not finish the word; they resolved upon treating the offenders with silent contempt. But in their own little society they always spoke of each other as "maidens," and praised the good old days when everything was called by its proper name, and they themselves were known universally as "maidens." And "maidens" they both remained, for the ramming-block, the big machine aforesaid, actually broke off his engagement with the youngest; he would not condescend to anything less than a "maiden."

"IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA."

SOME large ships were sent up toward the North Pole, for the purpose of discovering the boundaries of land and sea, and of trying how far men could make their way.

A year and a day had elapsed; amid mist and ice had they, with great difficulty, steered farther and farther; the winter had now begun; the sun had set, one long night would continue during many, many weeks. One unbroken plain of ice spread around them; the ships were all fast moored to it; the snow lay about in heaps, and had even shaped itself into cubiform houses, some as big as our barrows, some only just large enough for two or three men to find shelter within. Darkness they could not complain of, for the Northern Lights — Nature's fire-works — now red, now blue, flashed unceasingly, and the snow glistened so brightly.

At times when it was brightest came troops of the natives, strange-looking figures, clad in hairy skins, and with sledges made out of hard fragments of ice; they brought skins to exchange, which the sailors were only too glad to use as warm carpets inside their snow houses, and as beds whereon they could rest under their snowy tents, while outside prevailed an intensity of cold such as we never experience during our severest winters. But the sailors remembered that at home it was still autumn; and they thought of the warm sunbeams and the leaves still clinging to the trees in varied glories of crimson and gold. Their watches told them it was evening, and time for rest, and in one of the snow houses two sailors had already lain down to sleep; the youngest of these two had with him his best home-treasure, the Bible that his grandmother had given him at parting. Every night it lay under his pillow; he had known its contents from childhood, and every day he read a portion; and often as he lay on his couch, he recalled to mind those holy words of comfort, "If I should

take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there should Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand should hold me."

These sublime words of faith were on his lips as he closed his eyes, when sleep came to him, and dreams with sleep, — busy, swift-winged dreams, proving that though the body may rest, the soul must ever be awake. First he seemed to hear the melodies of songs dear to him in his home; a mild summer breeze seemed to breathe upon him, and a light shone upon his couch, as though the snowy dome above him had become transparent; he lifted his head, and behold! the dazzling white light was not the white of a snow wall, it came from the large wings of an angel stooping over him, an angel with eyes beaming with love. The angel's form seemed to spring from the pages of the Bible, as from the pitcher of a lily-blossom; he extended his arms, and lo! the narrow walls of the snow-hut sank back like a mist melting before the daylight. Once again the green meadows and autumnal-tinted woods of the sailor's home lay around him, bathed in quiet sunshine; the stork's nest was empty, but the apples still clung to the wild apple-tree; though leaves had fallen, the red hips glistened, and the blackbird whistled in the little green cage that hung in the lowly window of his childhood's home; the blackbird whistled the tune he had taught him, and the old grandmother wound chickweed about the bars of the cage, as her grandson had been wont to do. And the smith's pretty young daughter stood drawing water from the well, and as she nodded to the grandmother, the latter beckoned to her, and held up a letter to show her, a letter that had come that morning from the cold northern lands, from the North Pole itself, where the old woman's grandson now was — safe under God's protecting hand. And the two women, old and young, laughed and wept by turns — and he the while, the young sailor whose body was sleeping amid ice and snow, his spirit roaming in the world of dreams, under the angel's wings, saw and heard it all, and laughed and wept with them. And from the letter these words were read aloud, "Even in the uttermost parts of the sea, His right hand shall hold me fast:" and a sweet, solemn music was wafted round him, and

the angel drooped his wings ; like a soft protecting veil they fell closer over the sleeper.

The dream was ended ; all was darkness in the little snow-hut, but the Bible lay under the sailor's head, faith and hope abode in his heart. God was with him, and his home was with him, "even in the uttermost parts of the sea."

THE WINDMILL.

A WINDMILL stood upon the hill, proud to look at, and it was proud too.

"I am not proud at all," it said, "but I am very much enlightened without and within. I have sun and moon for my outward use, and for inward use too; and into the bargain I have stearine candles, train-oil lamps, and tallow candles; I may well say that I'm enlightened. I am a thinking being, and so well constructed that it 's quite delightful. I have a good windpipe in my chest, and I have four wings that are placed outside my head, just beneath my hat; the birds have only two wings, and are obliged to carry them on their backs. I am a Dutchman by birth — that may be seen by my figure — a flying Dutchman. They are considered supernatural beings, I know, and yet I am quite natural. I have a gallery round my chest, and house-room beneath it; that's where my thoughts dwell. My strongest thought, who rules and reigns, is called by the others 'The Man in the mill.' He knows what he wants, and is lord over the meal and the bran; but he has his companion too, and she calls herself 'Mother.' She is the very heart of me. She does not run about stupidly and awkwardly, for she knows what she wants, she knows what she can do; she 's as soft as a zephyr and as strong as a storm; she knows how to begin a thing carefully, and to have her own way. She is my soft temper, and the father is my hard one: they are two, and yet one; they each call the other 'My half.' These two have some little boys, young thoughts, that can grow. The little ones keep everything in order. When, lately, in my wisdom, I let the father and the boys examine my throat and the hole in my chest, to see what was going on there — for something in me was out of order, and it 's well to examine one's self — the little ones made a tremendous noise. The youngest jumped up into my hat,

and shouted so there that it tickled me. The little thoughts may grow; I know that very well; and out in the world thoughts come too, and not only of my kind, for as far as I can see I cannot discern anything like myself; but the wingless houses, whose throats make no noise, have thoughts too, and these come to my thoughts, and make love to them, as it is called. It 's wonderful enough — yes, there are many wonderful things. Something has come over me, or into me, — something has changed in the mill-work: it seems as if the one half, the father, had altered, and had received a better temper and a more affectionate helpmate — so young and good, and yet the same, only more gentle and good through the course of time. What was bitter has passed away, and the whole is much more comfortable.

"The days go on, and the days come nearer and nearer to clearness and to joy; and then a day will come when it will be over with me; but not over altogether. I must be pulled down that I may be built up again; I shall cease, but yet shall live on. To become quite a different being, and yet remain the same! That's difficult for me to understand, however enlightened I may be with sun, moon, stearine, train-oil, and tallow. My old wood-work and my old brick-work will rise again from the dust!

"I will hope that I may keep my old thoughts, the father in the mill, and the mother, great ones and little ones — the family; for I call them all, great and little, the *company of thoughts*, because I must, and cannot refrain from it.

"And I must also remain 'myself,' with my throat in my chest, my wings on my head, the gallery round my body; else I should not know myself, nor could the others know me, and say, 'There's the Mill on the hill, proud to look at, and yet not proud at all.'"

That is what the Mill said. Indeed, it said much more, but that is the most important part.

And the days came, and the days went, and yesterday was the last day.

Then the mill caught fire. The flames rose up high, and beat out and in, and bit at the beams and planks, and ate them up. The mill fell, and nothing remained of it but a

heap of ashes. The smoke drove across the scene of the conflagration, and the wind carried it away.

Whatever had been alive in the mill remained, and what had been gained by it has nothing to do with this story.

The miller's family — one soul, many thoughts, and yet only one — built a new, a splendid mill, which answered its purpose. It was quite like the old one, and people said, "Why, yonder is the mill on the hill, proud to look at!" But this mill was better arranged, more according to the time than the last, so that progress might be made. The old beams had become worm-eaten and spongy — they lay in dust and ashes. The body of the mill did not rise out of the dust as they had believed it would do: they had taken it literally, and all things are *not* to be taken literally.

THE NECK OF A BOTTLE.

IN a narrow, crooked street, among many shabby habitations, stood one very narrow, very tall house. None but poor folk dwelt here, but poorest of all looked the attic, where, outside the little window, hung in the sunshine an old bird-cage, that could not even boast of a proper bird-glass ; it had instead the neck of a bottle, placed upside down, with a cork stopping up the mouth. At the open window stood an old maid ; she had just been adorning the cage with chickweed ; the little canary who lived a prisoner within it hopped from perch to perch, and sang with all his might.

"Ah! you may well sing!" said the broken Bottle. Truly it could not speak aloud as we speak, but it had its own thoughts within for all that. "Ah! it is easy for you to sing! —you, with your limbs whole. You should just try what it is to have lost one's lower half — to have only a neck and a mouth left, and then a cork stuffed into one. I should like to hear you sing then! But it is well somebody is pleased. I have no cause to sing, neither can I, but I could sing once, when I was a whole bottle — I was called a lark then. Did not I sing that day in the wood when the furrier's daughter was betrothed? I remember it as though it had happened yesterday. I have lived through many things — I have been through fire and water — down in the black earth and higher up than most. And now I hover amid air and sunshine outside the cage. It might be worth while to listen to my history, but I am not going to proclaim it aloud, for one good reason — I can't!"

And so it told, or rather thought over, its own history to itself in silence, and the little bird sang merrily the while, and the people down below drove, or rode, or walked through the street, each thinking of his own affairs, just as the broken bottle did.

It remembered the fiery furnace in the manufactory, where

it had been blown into existence; it remembered how warm it was at first — how it had looked into the wild furnace, the home of its birth, and longed to leap into it again. But then, little by little, as it cooled, it found itself well off where it was, standing in a row with a whole regiment of brothers and sisters, all born from the same furnace, but some blown into champagne bottles, others into bottles for ale — and this makes a difference. Certainly, in the course of time and events, an ale-flask may possibly embrace the costliest Lachryma Christi, and a champagne bottle may be basely filled with blacking; but what each was born for will still be apparent through the form of each, and not even blacking can efface that patent of nobility.

All the bottles were soon packed up, and packed off, our bottle among them. Little at that time did it think of ending thus serving as a bird-glass. No matter, it is an honorable life that is thus useful to the last. It first saw daylight again, after it had been unpacked, together with its comrades, in a wine-merchant's cellar, and was then, for the first time, rinsed out — which was a ridiculous performance, it thought. The bottle now lay empty and corkless — felt itself wonderfully dull, as though wanting something — it knew not what. But now it was filled with good, glorious wine, received a cork, and was sealed up, with a label pasted on it, "Best Quality." It felt it was now a first-class bottle; the wine was good, and the bottle was good. Something within it seemed to be singing of things it knew nothing whatever about. The green sunlit mountains, where grows the vine, and where fair girls and merry youths sing and dance together. Ah! there it is right pleasant to live! Something seemed singing about this inside the bottle, as within the hearts of young poets, who yet know no more about the matter than the bottle knew.

One morning it was bought. The furrier's boy was sent to fetch a bottle of the best wine, and thus it became transported into a large basket, together with ham, cheese, and sausages, the best butter, and the whitest bread. The furrier's daughter herself packed the basket. She was very young and very pretty; she had laughing brown eyes, and smiling lips, almost as expressive as the eyes; her hands were small, soft, and white,

but not so white as her forehead and her throat. She was one of the prettiest girls in the town, and not yet betrothed.

And the basket lay in her lap while the party drove out into the wood. The neck of the bottle peeped forth between the folds of the white table-cloth; there was red sealing-wax on the cork, and this sealing-wax looked right into the young girl's face, and into the face of the young man who sat next her; he had been her companion from childhood; he was a portrait-painter's son, who had lately passed with honorable mention through his examination for the naval service. On the morrow he was to go with his ship to foreign lands; there was some talk about his voyage, and just while this was talked about it was not quite so pleasant to look at the eyes and lips of the furrier's pretty daughter.

The two young people took a walk in the green forest, talking — what did they talk about? The bottle could not hear that — it was left in the basket. It was very, very long before the basket was unpacked, but then? Why certainly some pleasant things must have happened meanwhile, for all eyes were laughing, even those of the furrier's daughter, though she talked less than before, and her cheeks blushed like two red roses.

The furrier took up the bottle, took up the corkscrew. O! what a strange sensation was that when, for the first time, the cork was drawn! The bottle had never been able to forget that solemn moment; and then the gurgling noise wherewith the wine flowed out into the glasses!

"The health of the betrothed!" cried the father, and every glass was emptied, and the young man kissed his pretty bride. Then he refilled the glasses, exclaiming: "To our joyful wedding this day twelve-month!" And when the glasses had been emptied the second time, he took the bottle and raised it high in the air, saying: "Thou hast served us here on the brightest day of my life, thou shalt never be profaned by any meaner service!"

And he flung it high into the air. But it came down again — it fell softly among the thick reeds fringing the little woodland lake. The broken bottle remembered perfectly well how it had lain there, thinking: "I gave them wine, they gave me

miry water; no matter, it was well meant!" It could see no more of the happy betrothed and the pleased parents, but it could hear them talking and singing in the distance. And presently two peasant boys came that way; they peeped in among the reeds, spied out the bottle, and took it away. Now it was provided for.

At their home in the little woodland hut, where they dwelt, they had, the day before, parted from their elder brother, who was a sailor, and had been to say farewell before going out on a long voyage. The mother was now packing up a few things which the father was to take to him in the town that evening — he would see him once more before his departure. A little flask full of spiced brandy had been placed in the parcel, but now the boys showed the larger and stronger bottle which they had found — it could hold more than the little one. So it was filled now, not with red wine as before, but with bitter, wholesome drops, good for the stomach. The new-found bottle was to go, the little one to stay at home. So now the bottle went forth on its travels; it went on board to be Peter Jensen's property, on board the very same ship by which went the young mate who had been betrothed that morning. He never looked at the bottle, or if he had, it would never have occurred to him to think, "This is the same bottle from which our health was drunk."

And now it contained not wine indeed, but something as good as wine. When Peter Jensen took it out, his comrades always called it "The apothecary;" it gave right good medicine, they thought, and it helped them as long as a drop was left in it. It was a pleasant time, and the bottle sang after its fashion; and thus it came to be nicknamed, "The great lark," "Peter Jensen's lark."

A long time had passed away, and it had long stood empty in a corner, when — the bottle knew not whether it was on its way out, or on the way home, it had not been ashore — a mighty storm arose. It was night, and pitch-dark; great heavy black waves surged and tossed the vessel to and fro; the mast broke, the planks flew out, the pumps were of no avail. The ship was sinking; but in the last minute the young sailor wrote on a fragment of paper: "Lord Jesu, have

mercy on us! we perish!" He added his bride's name, his own, and that of the ship, rolled the note into an empty bottle that came to his hand, pressed the cork down tight, and flung the bottle far into the stormy sea. Little thought he that this was the same bottle that had given him wine on the day of his happiness and hope. Now it rocked and tossed upon the billows, bearing its message, its greeting from the dead to the living.

The ship sank, the crew perished, but the bottle flew on like a bird — it bore a love-letter. And the sun rose up and the sun went down — that reminded the bottle of the hour of its birth, in the red glowing furnace; it longed to fly into his embrace. It encountered new storms; still it was neither swallowed up by sharks nor dashed against rocks. For more than a year and a day it drifted about, now northward, now southward, as it was carried by the tide. Certainly it was its own master; but one may get tired of that.

The letter, the last farewell from bridegroom to bride, would bring only sorrow, if it ever fell into the right hands. But where were those hands? the hands that had gleamed so white when they spread the table-cloth over the fresh grass in the green wood, on the day of betrothal? Where was the furrier's daughter? Where, indeed? What land was nearest now? The bottle could not answer these questions; it drifted and drifted, and was at last so weary of drifting — for which it had never been intended; but it drifted on all the same, till at last it was cast ashore on a foreign land. It understood not a word of what was spoken here; it was not the language it had always heard before, and one loses much in a country where one does not understand the language.

The bottle was picked up and examined, the letter inside was noticed, taken out, turned and twisted about, but not a word of what was written thereon could the folk make out. They understood, of course, that the bottle had been flung overboard, and that something was written on the paper, but that "something" was a complete mystery. And so the note was rolled up and put into the bottle again, and the bottle was placed in a large cabinet, in a large room, in a large house. Every time strangers came to the house the note was taken

out, unrolled, turned and twisted about, until the writing — it was only pencil-writing — became more and more illegible: at last the letters could hardly be traced at all. For a year the bottle remained in the cabinet, then it was sent up into an attic, where it got smothered up with dust and spider-webs; there it lurked and thought on its better days, when it poured out red wine in the fresh wood; when it was rocked by the billows and had had a secret, a letter, a sigh of farewell, intrusted to its safe keeping.

It was left among old lumber for twenty years; it would have been left there longer still, had not the house been rebuilt. The roof was taken off, the bottle was descried, remarks were made upon it, but it could not understand. One learns nothing, banished to a lumber-room — not even in twenty years. "Had I only spent that time in the parlor down-stairs!" sighed the bottle, "how much I should have learnt!"

It was now washed and rinsed out; in truth, it needed washing. It felt itself quite clear and transparent; it had renewed its youth in its old age, but the note, the precious note, was lost in the process. It was now filled with seed-corn, corked up tight, and well packed — it knew not where, but it could see neither lamp nor candle, not to speak of sun or moon; and "it is a pity to see nothing when one is travelling," thought the bottle. It saw nothing, but it did something — that was more important; it travelled, and arrived at the place for which it was destined. It was unpacked.

"What a deal of trouble those outlandish folk have taken about it!" Those were the first words it heard, and it understood them well; they were spoken in the language the bottle had heard from the first, at the factory, at the wine-merchant's, in the wood, and on shipboard; the only right, good old language, made to be understood! The bottle had come home to its own country! it nearly sprang out of the hands that held it, in its joy. It was emptied of its contents, and sent down into the cellar to be out of the way; no matter! home is home, even in the cellar! There it never thought how long it lay unnoticed, it lay comfortably; and, after a long interval, one day people came in, took this bottle and others, and went out.

The garden of the house was decked out in great magnificence; bright-colored lamps were hung in wreaths, and paper lanterns shone like large bright tulips. It was a lovely evening; the air was still and mild, the stars glittered brilliantly, and as for the new moon, why, people with good eyesight could see the whole, like a round, grayish globe, with one corner tinged with gold.

In the sidewalks there were a few illuminations too, though not so many as in the centre of the garden; a row of bottles, each with a candle in it, was set up along the hedges. The bottle that we know was among these; it felt perfectly in a state of rapture; it was now in a garden, as formerly it had been in the wood; again it heard festive sounds, song and music, the hum and buzz of passers-by, especially from the garden-side, where the lamps were burning, and the paper lanterns displayed their varied colors. For its own part, it stood in a sidewalk — that even supplied matter for thought; the bottle stood bearing its light — stood there for use and for ornament both, and that was just right. In such an hour one forgets twenty years spent in a lumber-room — and it is good to forget when memory is sadness.

Close by passed a pair, arm in arm, like the bridal pair out in the wood, like the mate and the furrier's daughter; the bottle could have believed it had lived it all over again. A tide of guests passed to and fro in the gardens, and among them an old maid, not friendless, indeed — far from it! but one who had survived all her relatives; and she was thinking of the same day years ago that the bottle thought of — she thought of the green wood and the young pair of betrothed lovers. Well might she think of them! for of those two she had been one; she was the survivor! that had been the happiest hour of her life — an hour never to be forgotten, however old an old maid may be. But she did not recognize the bottle, neither did the bottle recognize her; and thus folk pass one another by in this world. But they are sure to meet again, sooner or later, as did these two, who were now denizens of the same town.

The bottle's fate took it from the garden to the wine-merchant's; there it was again filled with wine, and then sold to

the aëronaut, who took it with him on his next ascent in his balloon. A crowd of people came to look on, a band of musicians had been engaged, and many other preparations made; the bottle witnessed all these from a basket, wherein he lay in company with a live rabbit, who was wretchedly low-spirited, because he knew he went up only to come down again with the parachute. The bottle, on the contrary, knew nothing about the matter; it saw how the balloon swelled out larger and larger, and when larger could not be, it began to lift itself higher and higher, to roll uneasily; then the ropes that held it down were cut, and up it flew with aëronaut, basket, rabbit, and bottle; the musicians struck up, and the people all cried, "Hurra!"

"This is a new style of navigation," thought the bottle. "There's one good point about it; one can hardly run upon rocks this way."

And the eyes of several thousands of people looked after the balloon, and the old maid watched it too; she was standing at her open attic window, where hung the cage with the little canary, who at that time did not possess a glass for his water, but was obliged to content himself with a cup. In the window stood a flowering myrtle; the old maid had thrust it on one side while she leaned forward to look out; she could see into the balloon; she saw how the aëronaut let the rabbit fall with the parachute; how he drank to the health of the crowd down below, and then flung the bottle high into the air. But she little thought that she had seen this identical bottle flying in the air once before, on her day of happiness in the green wood, in the time of her youth.

The bottle had no time to think at all, so unexpectedly had he attained the highest point of his life. Towers and roofs lay far below; men were so tiny, they could hardly be seen at all.

And now it sank, quite after a different fashion from the rabbit's. The bottle made somersaults in the air, felt itself so young, so wild! it was half filled with wine at first, but not for long. What an air-voyage! The sun shone on the bottle, the eyes of all men followed it; the balloon was already far away. Soon the bottle fell upon one of the roofs and dashed in two, but such a spirit seemed to animate the fragments,

they could not be still! They leaped and they rolled, ever downward, downward, till they reached the court-yard, where they broke into smaller fragments. Only the neck of the bottle was left whole; it looked as if it had been cut off with a diamond.

"It is still good for a bird-glass," said the man who lived in the cellar; but he himself possessed neither bird nor cage, and it would have been hardly worth while to procure these only because a fragment of a bottle that might be used as a glass had fallen into his hands. But it might be useful to the old maid in the attic, he thought; and thus the broken bottle was taken up-stairs, a cork was put in, the part that had formerly been uppermost was set lowest, as often happens in changes, fresh water was poured in, and it was hung on the side of the cage for the use of the little bird who sang so merrily.

"Ah, it is easy for you to sing!" quoth the bird-glass. It was a remarkable bird-glass, certainly; it had been up in a balloon; that, at least, was known of its history. Now, in its place by the cage, it could hear the hum and buzz of the people in the street below, could hear the old maid chatting in her chamber: she had a visitor just now, a friend of her own age, and they were talking, not about the bird-glass, but about the myrtle at the window.

"Indeed, I will not let you throw away two rix-dollars for your daughter's bridal bouquet," said the Old Maid. "You shall have a charming one, full of flowers! Just look at my beautiful myrtle! It is only an offshoot from the myrtle you gave me the day after my betrothal — don't you remember? I was to have made my bridal bouquet from it, when the year was up. But my wedding-day never came! Those eyes closed to this world that were to have been my light and joy through life; down, down, low beneath the waves he sleeps sweetly, my own darling! And the myrtle and I grew old together; and when the myrtle withered, I took the last fresh bough, and set it in the mould, and now the bough is a tree, and shall serve at last at a wedding-feast, — shall supply your daughter's bridal bouquet!"

And there were tears in the old maid's eyes, as she remem-

bered her betrothal in the wood, her lover's bright face, his caressing words, his first kiss — but she said no more; she was an old maid now. She thought of so many things; but she never thought at all that just outside her window was a memorial of that time, even the neck of the bottle whence had gushed the wine from which her own and her lover's health had been drunk. Neither did the old bottle recognize her, for it did not listen to a single word she said, partly and chiefly, because it thought only of itself.

GOLDEN TREASURE.

THE drummer's wife went to church; she saw the new altar, the pictures on the walls, the angel-faces carved on the arches. Beautiful were the figures in the pictures, dressed in bright colors, and with a glory round their heads; beautiful were the carved cherubs too, painted and gilded both, their hair shining like gold, like sunshine. But the sunshine itself was still more beautiful, the sunshine that God, not man, had made; ever brighter and redder it glowed between the dark trees, as the sun went down. And she gazed upon the red setting sun, and had her own thoughts about it and many other things, but most of all about the little child that the stork would bring her; and the drummer's wife felt so happy while she gazed, and she wished most fervently that her child might be a creature bright as a sunbeam, or at least as one of the shining angels in the church.

And when she actually held her little one in her arms, and lifted it up to show her husband, it seemed to her that her infant really had some resemblance to the cherubs; it had hair like gold, hair that had caught the reflection of the setting sun.

"My sunshine, my wealth, my golden treasure!" cried the mother, kissing the bright locks; and all was gladness, music, and song in the drummer's home. The drummer himself beat a whirlwind on his drum, and the drum seemed to cry, "Red hair! the young one has red hair! listen, believe the drum and not thy mother; drum-a-drum, drum!"

And the town agreed with the drum.

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The boy was taken to church and christened; he was named Peter. All the town called him "Peter, the drummer's red-haired boy;" but his mother kissed his red hair and called him "Golden Treasure."

In the hollow way, in the soft clay, had a multitude of folk scratched their names with a penknife. "That is fame," quoth the Drummer; "every one likes to be remembered;" and he too scratched his name and that of his little son there. But in spring came the swallows; during their travels they had seen all manner of characters in the rock-side, or within the temple walls of India, chronicling great deeds of mighty kings, immortal names, so old that no one could spell them out. Such is fame! And the swallows built their nests in the clay, and the mould crumbled, and the rain came down, washing away all traces of the names, the drummer's and his little son's among them. "At any rate, Peter's name was there for a year and a half," quoth his father.

"Fool!" thought the Drum; but it could only say, "Drum-a-drum-drum! Drum-a-drum-drum!"

A boy full of life and spirit was "the drummer's red-haired son." A lovely voice he had, and he sang like the birds in the wood — all melody, and yet no tune. "He must be a choir-boy," said his mother; "he must sing in the church, standing under the pretty gilded cherubs, whom he is so like."

"Choir-boy?" repeated the wits of the town. "Say rather fire-boy;" and the drum heard it.

"Don't go home, Peter," cried the boys in the street. "If they send you to sleep in the attic, your hair will set the thatch on fire."

"Beware of the drumsticks!" returned Peter, clinching his little fists; and tiny fellow as he was, his neighbors learnt to keep out of his way.

The town musician was stiff and proud, a great gentleman in his way; he thought well of Peter, took him home with him, and gave him a lesson on the violin; he fancied there was something in the boy's fingers that showed him born to become more than a drummer.

"I will be a soldier!" declared Peter, who considered it the finest thing in the world to wear a uniform, shoulder a gun, and march, "Left, right! left, right!"

"Ah, thou shalt learn to obey the drumskin, drum-a-drum drum!" quoth the Drum.

"It is all very well being a soldier when there's a war," said Peter's father, "so that one may march home a general."

"God save us from a war!" cried his mother.

"Why, we have nothing to lose," rejoined the Drummer.

"Yes, we have my boy," she replied.

"But just think, if he were to come home a general?" asked the father.

"Without arms and legs! no, thank you; I would rather keep my Golden Treasure entire."

Drum, drum-a-drum-drum! War came, in real earnest; the soldiers marched forth, and the drummer's red-haired boy with them. The mother wept for her "Golden Treasure;" the father saw him in imagination return home "famous;" the town musician thought he had better have stayed at home and studied music.

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"Red-tuft!" cried the soldiers, and Peter only laughed, but when some called him "Foxey," he bit his lips and looked another way; that was a jest he did not relish. But the boy was brisk, merry, and good-humored, and thus soon became a favorite. Amid rain and mist, wet through to the skin, he had to sleep many a night under the open sky; but his good-humor did not fail him, and he was up again briskly and sounded with his drumsticks, "Drum-a-drum drum! up every man!" Certainly he was a born drummer-boy.

It was a day of battle: the sun was not yet risen, but it was morning; the air was cold, the struggle hot, the morning was misty, but still more mist came from the gunpowder. Bullets and grenades flew overhead; still "Forward." One after another the men sank down, their temples bleeding, their cheeks white as ashes. But the little drummer-boy's color was still fresh; not a whit hurt, he looked with beaming eyes at the dog belonging to the regiment as it ran by his side; the whole seemed more like a game to him, the child to whom the balls might have been playthings.

"March, forward, march!" were the words of command given to the drummers; but orders may have to be reversed — and with good reason too — and now the word was "Backward!" But still the little drummer-boy sounded "March,

forward," not understanding that the order was reversed ; and the soldiers obeyed the drum, and still advanced. It was well they did so, the blunder gave them a victory.

But victory is dearly bought. The grenades tear off the flesh in bleeding morsels, set fire to the heap of straw whither the poor wounded wretch had dragged himself, thinking to lie safe for many hours, though perhaps only to die forgotten and forsaken. These are ill things to think upon, yet think on them one must even in the peaceful town far off. How often did not Peter's father and mother think of them while he was in the war!

It was the day of battle ; the sun had not yet risen, but it was morning. The drummer and his wife had fallen into a slumber after a wakeful night, spent in talking about their boy. But he, wherever he was, God's hand was over him they knew. And his father now dreamt that the war was ended, that the soldiers came home, and that Peter wore a silver cross on his breast ; but his mother dreamt that she was in church gazing on the pictures and the carved angels with gilded hair, and that her own boy — her heart's Golden Treasure — stood in white robes amid the angels, and sang so sweetly, as only angels can sing, and was lifted up into the sunshine with them, nodding a kindly greeting to his mother.

"My Golden Treasure!" she exclaimed, and she awoke. "Now I know that our Lord has taken him," said she, and she clasped her hand, leant her head against the bed curtains, and wept. "Where has he found his rest? in the wide grave they dig for so many of the brave dead, or in the waters of the marsh? No one will know his grave, no holy words will be read over it." And the Lord's Prayer passed mutely through her mind, her head drooped in weariness, and she fell asleep.

Days slip away, now in waking hours, now in dreams.

It was evening ; a rainbow arched over the field of battle, touching the skirt of the wood and the deep moor. There is a popular saying, "Where the rainbow touches the earth a treasure lies buried,— a golden treasure ;" so it was here ; no one thought of the little drummer-boy as his mother thought, and therefore had she thus dreamt of him. But not a hair of his head was lost, not a single golden hair. "Drum-a-drum

drum; see him come, see him come!" For with song and shout, and decked with the green leaves of victory, the regiment marched home; the war was ended, peace was proclaimed. The dog belonging to the regiment jumped and ran, making many wide circuits, as though to make the journey three times longer.

Days and weeks slipped away, and, behold, Peter entered his parents' room: he was as brown as a wild man of the woods, his eyes so bright, his face beaming as the sunshine. And his mother clasped him in her arms, kissed his lips, his eyes, his red hair. She had her boy again: there was no silver cross on his breast, as his father had dreamt, but he had his whole bones, which his mother had not dreamt. What joy! all three laughed and wept by turns, and Peter embraced the old drum in the corner: "Here it stands still, the old thing!" and his father beat a tattoo upon it, "as much fuss as though there were a fire in the town," quoth the old drum to itself.

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And now what next? Ask the town musician. "Peter grows too big to be a drummer-boy," said he; "Peter will be a bigger man than I," which was true enough, for all that he had taken a life-time to learn, Peter learnt in half a year. And he took such delight in learning, he enjoyed everything, his eyes sparkled and his hair shone, as could not be denied.

"He should dye his hair," said their next door neighbor. "The police-master's daughter did so, and how well it answered; she was betrothed immediately."

"But her hair soon afterward grew as green as duckweed, and she has had to dye it again, ever so many times."

"Well, she can afford it, and so can Peter. Does not he go into the best houses, even to the mayor's, to teach Miss Lotty the harpsichord!" Ah! Peter knew how to play, to play right out of his heart charming pieces that had never been noted down on music paper. Through moonlight nights and stormy nights he played alike — played till his thoughts grew strong and soaring, and great plans for the future hovered before him. And he sat beside the mayor's daughter, Miss Lotty, at the harpsichord, and her delicate fingers danced lightly over chords that vibrated right into Peter's heart; it

seemed as though it were growing too big for his body to hold it, and this happened not once only, but many times, and so it chanced that one day he seized the delicate fingers and the daintily formed hand and kissed it, and looked right into her large brown eyes. There's no telling what he said, but we may guess it. And Lotty colored crimson, face and neck, and not a word did she answer, and just then strangers came into the room, among them the councilor's son, with his high smooth forehead. But Peter stayed on, and Lotty's kindest glances were given to him.

That evening at home he talked of going abroad, and of the golden treasure that his violin was for him. "Drum-a-drum drum," thought the old drum in the corner. "So Peter has gone mad; the house is on fire, methinks."

Next day the mother went to market. "Have you heard the news, Peter?" began she on her return. "Charming news! The mayor's daughter, Miss Lotty, was betrothed to the councilor's son yesterday evening!"

"No!" cried Peter, springing up from his chair. But his mother insisted "Yes;" she had it from the barber's wife, and the barber had it from the mayor's own lips. And Peter grew pale as death, and sat down again in his chair.

"What is the matter with you?" cried his mother.

"All right! let me alone!" said he, but the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"My sweet child! my Golden Treasure!" muttered the mother; and she wept, while the old drum in the corner sang to itself: "Lotty is dead! Lotty is dead! and now the song is ended!"

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But no, the song was not ended; many verses, and some of the best, had yet to be sung. "What a fuss she makes!" quoth the next door neighbor of Peter's mother. "All the world must read the letters she gets from her Golden Treasure, and hear what the newspapers say about him and his violin. He sends her money too, and he had need, now she is a widow."

"He plays before kings and emperors," said the town musi-

cian. "That never fell to my lot, but he is at least my pupil, and will not forget his old master."

"My husband dreamt," said his mother, "that Peter came home from the war with a silver cross on his breast; he does wear a cross now, though not one earned in the war; he bears an order of knighthood. His father should have lived to see it!"

"He is famous!" quoth the old drum, and everybody in his native town said the same. Peter, the drummer's red-haired boy — Peter, whom they had seen in wooden shoes, a little drummer-boy — was now famous.

"He played to us before he played to the king," said the mayor's wife. "Once upon a time he was mad about our Lotty — how my husband laughed when he was told of it! Ah! that boy must be always looking so high!"

Yes, a golden treasure lay hidden in the heart and soul of the drummer's boy, who had formerly sounded "Forward!" to troops ready to retreat — a golden treasure, the gift of music. In his violin seemed sometimes to dwell the power and volume of an organ; while at other times all the elves of Midsummer Eve seemed dancing as he touched the strings, and the throstle's song and the human voice were heard between; and thus all hearts were moved when he played, and his name was borne throughout all lands. "And then he is so handsome!" said some of the ladies, old as well as young; and one lady who had set up an album for the locks of celebrated characters, begged for a tress from the young violinist's abundance of hair, "red," or "golden," as you liked to call it.

And now once more to the drummer's lowly dwelling returned the son, handsome as a prince, happier than a king, his eyes sparkling, his face like sunshine. And he held his mother in his arms, and she kissed him, and wept for joy; and he greeted as old friends every piece of worn-out furniture the room possessed, even to the chest of drawers, with the tea-cups and flower-glass upon it, and the little cot where he had slept when a child. But the old drum he dragged forward into the middle of the room, saying: "Father would have sounded a welcome upon thee to-day, but now I must do it instead." And he thundered so upon the drum! a regular

tempest it was, and the old drum felt honored thereby. But somehow it chanced that the drumskin burst.

"Well! he *has* a fist!" quoth the old drum to itself. "Now I shall always keep a souvenir of him! I expect that mother, too, will burst for joy over her Golden Treasure!"

This is the history of Golden Treasure.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER was so lovable, wise, and good! We all looked up to great-grandfather. He used be called, as far back as I can remember, "Father's-father," and also "Mother's-father;" but when brother Frederick's little son came into the family, he was promoted, and got the title of "Great-grandfather." He could not expect to get any higher!

He was very fond of us all, but our times he did not seem fond of. "Old times were good times," he used to say; "quiet and steady-going they were; in these days there is such a hurrying and turning upside-down of everything. The young people lay down the law, and speak of the kings, even, as if they were their equals. Any good-for-nothing fellow can dip a rag in rotten water, and wring it out over the head of an honorable man!"

Great-grandfather would get quite angry and red in the face, when he talked of these things; but very soon he would smile his kind, genial smile, and say, "Well, well! I may be mistaken; I belong to the old times, and can't quite get a foothold in the new! May God lead and guide us aright!"

When great-grandfather got to talking of old times, it seemed to me that I was living in them, so clearly did I see it all. Then I fancied myself driving along in a gilt coach, with fine liveried servants standing on the step behind; I saw the guilds move their signs, and march in procession, with banners, and with music at their head; I was present at the merry Christmas feasts, where games of forfeit were being played, and where the players were dressed in fancy dress and mask. It is true that in those old times cruel and dreadful things used to happen, such as torture, and rack, and bloodshed; but all these horrors had something stirring about them that fascinated me. I used to fancy how it was when the Danish

lords gave the peasants their liberty, and when the Crown Prince of Denmark abolished the slave-trade.

It was famous to hear great-grandfather tell of all this, and to hear him speak of his youth. But I think the times before that, even, were the very best of all, — so strong and great!

"It was a rude time!" said brother Frederick; "thank God we are well out of it!" And he used to say this right out to great-grandfather: that was very improper, I know, but I had great respect for Frederick all the same. He was my oldest brother, and he said he was old enough to be my father, — but then he said so many odd things. He had graduated with honors, and was so bright and clever at his work in father's office that father intended to take him into partnership soon. He was the one, of us all, that great-grandfather talked most to; but they did not get on well, and always fell to arguing; they did not understand each other, those two, — and never would, said the family; but, small as I was, I soon saw that neither of them could do without the other. Great-grandfather used to listen with the brightest look in his eyes, when Frederick read aloud about the progress in science, or new discoveries of natural laws, and of all the other wonders of our age.

"The human race grows cleverer, but not better," great-grandfather used to say; "they take pains to contrive the most dreadful and hurtful weapons, wherewith to kill and maim each other."

"So much the sooner will the war be over," Frederick would reply; "then one need not wait seven years for the blessings of peace. The world is full-blooded, and needs a blood-letting from time to time — that is a necessity."

One day Frederick told him of something that had really happened in a small country, and in our age. The mayor's clock — the large clock on the City Hall — marked the time for the city, and for all its inhabitants. The clock did not go very well, but that did not matter, nor prevent everybody from being guided by it. Then by and by railways were built in that country, and clocks are always connected with the railways in other countries, — so that one must be very sure of the time, and know it very exactly, or else there will be colli-

GREAT-GRANDFATHER. See page 287.

sions. At the railway station they had a sun-regulated clock that was perfectly reliable and exact, — but not so the mayor's, — and now everybody went by the railway clock.

I laughed, and thought it was a funny story, but great-grandfather did not laugh; he grew very serious.

"There is a deep meaning in what you have been telling me," he said, "and I understand the thought that prompted you to tell it to me. There is a moral in that clock-work; it makes me think of another clock, — my parents' plain, old-fashioned Barnholm clock, with the leaden weights. It was the time-measurer for their lives, and for my childhood. I dare say it did not go very correctly, but it did go, and we used to look at the hour-hand, and believed in it, and never thought about the wheels inside. The government machinery was like that old clock; in those days everybody had faith in it, and only looked at the hour-hand. Now the government machinery is like a clock in a glass case, so that one can look right into the machinery, and see the wheels turning and whizzing: one gets quite anxious, sometimes, as to what will become of that spring, or that wheel! And then I think how will it be possible for all this to keep time? and I miss my childish faith in the faultlessness of the old clock. That is the weakness of these times!"

And then great-grandfather would talk till he got quite angry. He and Frederick did not agree well, and yet they could not bear to be separated, — "just like the old times and the new." They both felt this when Frederick was to start on his journey, — far away, to America. It was on business for the firm, that he had to go. A sad parting it was for great-grandfather, and a long, long journey, — quite across an immense ocean, and to another part of the globe.

"You shall have a letter from me every fortnight," said Frederick, "and, quicker than by any letter you will hear of me by means of the telegraph. The days will be like hours, and the hours like minutes!"

Through the telegraph came a greeting from Frederick, from England, when he was going on board the steamer. Sooner than by letter — even if the quick-sailing clouds had

been postmen — came news from America, where Frederick had gone on shore but a few hours since.

"What a glorious, divine thought this is, that is given us in this age," said great-grandfather; "it is a real blessing for the human race."

"And it was in our country," I said, "that *that* law of nature was first understood and expressed. Frederick told me so!"

"Yes," said great-grandfather, and kissed me; "and I have looked into the two kind eyes that were the first to see this wonderful law of nature, — they were child's eyes, like yours, — and I have pressed his hand!" and then he kissed me again.

More than a month had passed, when a letter from Frederick brought us the news that he was engaged to a beautiful and lovable young girl, whom he was sure the whole family would be delighted with. He sent her photograph, too, and we all looked at it just so with our eyes, and then with a magnifying-glass; for this is the beauty of those pictures, — that not only can they bear the closest inspection by the sharpest magnifying-glass, but that then, and not till then, you get the full likeness. This is what no painter has been able to do, not even the greatest in old times.

"If only that discovery had been made earlier in my time," said great-grandfather, "then we might now have seen, fact to face, the world's greatest and best men! How good and gentle this young girl looks," and he gazed long at her through the glass. "Now I know her face, I shall recognize her at once when she comes in at the door." But that had very nearly never come to pass; luckily, we at home did not hear of the danger till it had past.

The young couple reached England pleasantly and safely, and from there they meant to go by steamer to Copenhagen. They were in sight of land, — the Danish coast, and the white, sandy downs of the west coast of Jutland. There was a heavy sea, that threatened to dash the ship on the shore, and no lifeboat could get out to them. Then came the night, dark and dismal; but in the midst of the darkness came a bright blazing rocket from the shore, and shot out far over the ship that

was aground. The rocket carried a rope, that fell down on the ship; and thus the connection between those on shore and those at sea was established. And soon, through the heavy, rolling sea, the saving-car was being drawn slowly toward the shore: and in it was a young and lovely woman, alive and well; and wonderfully happy was she when her young husband stood by her side on the firm, sandy beach. All on board were saved, and that before it was quite day.

We were sound asleep here in Copenhagen, thinking neither of sorrow nor danger. When we were all assembled for breakfast came a rumor, caused by a telegram, of the wreck of an English steamer on the west coast. We all grew heart-sore and anxious; but within the hour came a telegram from the dear ones, who were saved, — Frederick and his young wife, — who would soon be with us.

All cried; I cried too, and great-grandfather cried, and folded his hands, and — I am sure of it — blessed the present age.

That day great-grandfather gave two hundred rix-dollars toward erecting the monument to Hans Christian Örsted. When Frederick came home with his young wife, and heard of it, he said: "That was right, great-grandfather! Now I'll read for you what Örsted wrote, many, many years ago, about old times and new times!"

"I suppose he was of your opinion," said great-grandfather.

"Yes, that you may be sure of," said Frederick; "and so are you, for you have given something to his monument!"

HOLGER DANSKE.

IN Denmark there lies a castle named Kronborg. It lies close by the Öre sound, where the ships pass through by hundreds every day — English, Russian, and likewise Prussian ships. And they salute the old castle with cannons — 'Boom!' And the castle answers with a 'Boom!' for that's what the cannons say instead of 'Good-day' and 'Thank you!' In winter no ships sail there, for the whole sea is covered with ice quite across to the Swedish coast; but it has quite the look of a high road. There wave the Danish flag and the Swedish flag, and Danes and Swedes say 'Good-day' and 'Thank you!' to each other, not with cannons, but with a friendly grasp of the hand; and one gets white bread and biscuits from the other — for strange fare tastes best. But the most beautiful of all is the old Kronborg; and here it is that Holger Danske sits in the deep dark cellar, where nobody goes. He is clad in iron and steel, and leans his head on his strong arm; his long beard hangs down over the marble table, and has grown into it. He sleeps and dreams, but in his dreams he sees everything that happens up here in Denmark. Every Christmas Eve comes an angel, and tells him that what he has dreamed is right, and that he may go to sleep in quiet, for that Denmark is not yet in any real danger; but when once such a danger comes, then old Holger Danske will rouse himself, so that the table shall burst when he draws out his beard! Then he will come forth and strike, so that it shall be heard in all the countries in the world."

An old grandfather sat and told his little grandson all this about Holger Danske; and the little boy knew that what his grandfather told him was true. And while the old man sat and told his story, he carved an image which was to represent Holger Danske, and to be fastened to the prow of a ship; for the old grandfather was a carver of figure-heads, that is, one

who cuts out the figures fastened to the front of ships, and from which every ship is named. And here he had cut out Holger Danske, who stood there proudly with his long beard, and held the broad battle-sword in one hand, while with the other he leaned upon the Danish arms.

And the old grandfather told so much about distinguished men and women, that it appeared at last to the little grandson as if he knew as much as Holger Danske himself, who, after all, could only dream; and when the little fellow was in his bed, he thought so much of it, that he actually pressed his chin against the coverlet, and fancied he had a long beard that had grown fast to it.

But the old grandfather remained sitting at his work, and carved away at the last part of it; and this was the Danish coat of arms. When he had done, he looked at the whole, and thought of all he had read and heard, and that he had told this evening to the little boy; and he nodded, and wiped his spectacles, and put them on again, and said, —

"Yes, in my time Holger Danske will probably not come; but the boy in the bed yonder may get to see him, and be there when the push really comes."

And the old grandfather nodded again: and the more he looked at Holger Danske the more plain did it become to him that it was a good image he had carved. It seemed really to gain color, and the armor appeared to gleam like iron and steel; the hearts in the Danish arms became redder and redder, and the lions with the golden crowns on their heads leaped up.[1]

"That's the most beautiful coat of arms there is in the world!" said the old man. "The lions are strength, and the heart is gentleness and love!"

And he looked at the uppermost lion, and thought of King Canute, who bound great England to the throne of Denmark; and he looked at the second lion, and thought of Waldemar, who united Denmark and conquered the Wendish lands; and he glanced at the third lion, and remembered Margaret, who united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. But while he looked at the red hearts, they gleamed more brightly than before; they became flames, and his heart followed each of them.

[1] The Danish arms consist of three lions between nine hearts.

The first heart led him into a dark, narrow prison; there sat a prisoner, a beautiful woman, the daughter of King Christian IV., Eleanor Ulfeld;[1] and the flame which was shaped like a rose, attached itself to her bosom and blossomed, so that it became one with the heart of her, the noblest and best of all Danish women.

And his spirit followed the second flame, which led him out upon the sea, where the cannons thundered and the ships lay shrouded in smoke; and the flame fastened itself in the shape of a ribbon of honor on the breast of Hvitfeld, as he blew himself and his ship into the air, that he might save the fleet.[2]

And the third flame led him to the wretched huts of Greenland, where the preacher Hans Egede[3] wrought, with love in every word and deed: the flame was a star on his breast, another heart in the Danish arms.

And the spirit of the old grandfather flew on before the waving flames, for his spirit knew whither the flames desired to go. In the humble room of the peasant woman stood Frederick VI., writing his name with chalk on the beam.[4] The flame trembled on his breast, and trembled in his heart; in the peasant's lowly room his heart too became a heart in the Danish arms. And the old grandfather dried his eyes, for he

[1] This highly gifted Princess was the wife of Corfitz Ulfeld, who was accused of high treason. Her only crime was the most faithful love to her unhappy consort; but she was compelled to pass twenty-two years in a horrible dungeon, until her persecutor, Queen Sophia Amelia, was dead.

[2] In the naval battle in Kjöge Bay between the Danes and the Swedes, in 1710, Hvitfeld's ship, the *Dannebrog*, took fire. To save the town of Kjöge, and the Danish fleet which was being driven by the wind toward his vessel, he blew himself and his whole crew into the air.

[3] Hans Egede went to Greenland in 1721, and toiled there during fifteen years among incredible hardships and privations. Not only did he spread Christianity, but exhibited in himself a remarkable example of a Christian man.

[4] On a journey on the west coast of Jutland, the King visited an old woman. When he had already quitted her house, the woman ran after him and begged him, as a remembrance, to write his name upon a beam; the King turned back, and complied. During his whole life-time he felt and worked for the peasant class; therefore the Danish peasants begged to be allowed to carry his coffin to the royal vault at Roeskilde, four Danish miles from Copenhagen.

had known King Frederick with the silvery locks and the honest blue eyes, and had lived for him: he folded his hands, and looked in silence straight before him. Then came the daughter-in-law of the old grandfather, and said it was late, he ought now to rest; and the supper table was spread.

"But it is beautiful, what you have done, grandfather!" said she. "Holger Danske, and all our old coat of arms! It seems to me just as if I had seen that face before!"

"No, that can scarcely be," replied the old grandfather; "but I have seen it, and I have tried to carve it in wood as I have kept it in my memory. It was when the English lay in front of the wharf, on the Danish second of April,[1] when we showed that we were old Danes. In the *Denmark*, on board which I was, in Steen Bille's squadron, I had a man at my side — it seemed as if the bullets were afraid of him! Merrily he sang old songs, and shot and fought as if he were something more than a man. I remember his face yet; but whence he came, and whither he went, I know not — nobody knows. I have often thought he might have been old Holger Danske himself, who had swum down from the Kronborg, and aided us in the hour of danger: that was my idea, and there stands his picture."

And the statue threw its great shadow up against the wall, and even over part of the ceiling; it looked as though the real Holger Danske were standing behind it, for the shadow moved; but this might have been because the flame of the candle did not burn steadily. And the daughter-in-law kissed the old grandfather, and led him to the great arm-chair by the table; and she and her husband, who was the son of the old man, and father of the little boy in the bed, sat and ate their supper; and the grandfather spoke of the Danish lions and of the Danish hearts, of strength and of gentleness; and quite clearly did he explain that there was another strength besides the power that lies in the sword; and he pointed to the shelf on which were the old books, where stood the plays of Holberg, which had been read so often, for they were very amusing; one could almost fancy one recognized the people of bygone days in them.

[1] On the 2d of April, 1801, occurred the sanguinary naval battle between the Danes and the English, under Sir Hyde Parker and Nelson.

"See, he knew how to strike, too," said the grandfather: "he scourged the foolishness and prejudice of the people so long as he could" — and the grandfather nodded at the mirror, above which stood the calendar, with the "Round Tower"[1] on it, and said, "Tycho Brahe was also one who used the sword, not to cut into flesh and bone, but to build up a plainer way among all the stars of heaven. And then *he* whose father belonged to my calling, the son of the old figure-head carver, he whom we have ourselves seen with his silver hairs and his broad shoulders, he whose name is spoken of in all lands! Yes, *he* was a sculptor; *I* am only a carver. Yes, Holger Danske may come in many forms, so that one hears in every country in the world of Denmark's strength. Shall we now drink the health of Bertel?"[2]

But the little lad in the bed saw plainly the old Kronborg with the Öre Sound, the real Holger Danske, who sat deep below, with his beard grown through the marble table, dreaming of all that happens up here. Holger Danske also dreamed of the little humble room where the carver sat; he heard all that passed, and nodded in his sleep, and said, —

"Yes, remember me, ye Danish folk; remember me. I shall come in the hour of need."

And without by the Kronborg shone the bright day, and the wind carried the notes of the hunting-horn over from the neighboring land; the ships sailed past, and saluted — "Boom! boom!" and from the Kronborg came the reply, "Boom! boom!" But Holger Danske did not awake, however loudly they shot, for it was only "Good-day" and "Thank you!" There must be another kind of shooting before he awakes; but he will awake, for there is faith in Holger Danske.

[1] The astronomical observatory at Copenhagen.

[2] Bertel Thorwaldsen.

HOLGER DANSKE. See page 292.

THE OLD BACHELOR'S NIGHTCAP.

THERE is in Copenhagen a street known by the strange name of Hysken Street. Why is it so named? what can "Hysken" mean? The name was originally German; "Häuschen," it ought to be called, meaning "small houses." For the houses in this street at the time it received its name were very much like the wooden booths we still see set up in the markets, — a little bigger perhaps, and provided with windows; but then these windows were made only of horn or stretched bladder, for at that time glass windows were too dear to be common. And the time referred to is so very long ago, that my great-great-grandfather, when he spoke of it, always called it "the days of old." It was, in fact, several hundred years ago.

The rich merchants of Bremen and Lübeck used then to trade in Copenhagen, not in their own persons, but sending thither their clerks, who dwelt in the wooden booths in the Street of Small Houses, and there sold their ales and spicery; good German ales of different kinds, and all manner of spices, saffron, anise, ginger, and especially pepper. And from this very pepper which they sold, these petty German traders in Denmark came to be called "Pebersvende," or "Pepper-boys." And as it formed part of the engagement they entered into before they left home that they were not to marry in Denmark, and as many of them sojourned in Copenhagen till they were quite old men, living alone, cooking and doing everything for themselves, they often grew such odd old fellows, with such peculiar whims and ways, — and from them the name of "Pebersvend" has come to be given to all single men who have attained old age. So much by way of introduction.

Up in the Street of Small Houses, in the old times, there was no pavement; folk tumbled into hole after hole, and very narrow was it; the booths were such near neighbors that in

summer time a rope was often suspended across the street from one booth to the opposite one. And everywhere was such an aromatic odor of pepper, saffron, and ginger. Behind the counters stood not young lads, no, but old fellows clad after old fashions. It is a pity it never occurred to one of them to have his portrait painted, for it would be worth while now to possess a picture of any one of them, as he stood behind the counter or walked to church on holidays. The hat was broad-brimmed and high-crowned, with perhaps a feather in it, if the wearer were not very old; the woollen shirt was concealed by a smooth linen collar; the jacket was neatly buttoned up, the cape hung loosely over it, and the breeches reached down to the square-toed shoes; stockings they wore not. In the belt were fastened a spoon and knife, to be used at meals, nay, also a larger knife, or dagger, for self-defense, as was often needed in those days. Clad after this fashion, on festival days, was old Anthony, one of the oldest traders of the Small Houses, with this addition, that under his hat he wore a knitted cap, a regular nightcap. He had used himself to it, and wore it always; he possessed two exactly alike; he was just the old fellow for a picture: long and lean as a lath, wrinkled about the lips and eyes; he had long bony fingers and gray bushy eyebrows. Over his left eye hung a perfect tuft; it was not handsome, certainly, but it made him a man easily recognized. It was said of him that he came from Bremen: this was a mistake; his mother lived there, but he himself came from Thuringia, from the town of Eisenach, close under Wartburg. Of these places old Anthony spoke but little, but he thought the more.

The old fellows in the Small Houses rarely met together; each sojourned in his own booth, which was shut up early in the evening, and then looked dark enough, with only a faint ray of light piercing through the little horn window-pane on the roof. Within, perhaps, the solitary foreigner was sitting on his bed, chanting his evening psalm out of his old German hymn-book, or was poking about over his household matters. A merry life it was not by any means; a bitter lot is that of the stranger in a strange land.

A miserable place indeed was the Street of Small Houses

on a dark, stormy night, amid wind and rain. Not a light could be seen save the one very small lamp hanging just at the end of the street under the picture of the Blessed Virgin which was painted on the wall, and the water was heard splashing, splashing ceaselessly against the wood-work. Such evenings must be long and lonesome, and would be worse still were people unoccupied. To pack and unpack, polish one's scales, etc., cannot be needful every day, but then one generally finds something else to be done. So at least always did old Anthony; he had his clothes to patch, his shoes to mend. And when at last he got into bed, and drew his night-cap closer over his face, he was pretty sure to draw it up again to see if his light were properly extinguished. He would feel about, draw down the wick, turn round on the other side, and lie down again, but then would come the thought, "I wonder whether every coal has really burnt out in the little fire; one spark might kindle up into mischief," and with this idea he would creep out of bed, grope his way down the steps, — staircase it could not be called, — and yet when he got down there was sure to be not a single spark left in the little fire-pot. Yet before he had got half-way back to bed, he would feel uncertain whether he had drawn the iron bolt over his door. His lean limbs shivered, and his teeth chattered with cold before he got safe into bed again; then he would draw the coverlet closer, his nightcap closer over his eyes, and turn his thoughts right away from the burden and labor of the day; but hardly was this to his comfort. For old memories came then and drew their curtains round, and O! there lurk sharp needles in them; when we touch them they pierce the tender skin, draw blood, burn within us, bring tears to our eyes! So at least was it with old Anthony; oftentimes hot tears like the brightest pearls rolled down over the coverlet or on the floor; his eyes seemed to burn with them or their light seemed turned into darkness, but still a vivid picture seemed before his sight. Then he would wipe his eyes with his night-cap, and both tears and pictures vanished; but the source of both remained, it lay deep in his heart. The pictures came not in regular order, as they had followed one another in his past life, and the most painful ones came oftenest; but these

even had a brightness and glory of their own, only they cast the deepest shadows.

"How beautiful are the beech woods of Denmark!" people are wont to exclaim. But more beautiful to Anthony were the beech woods near Wartburg: mightier, and more venerable than any Danish trees were the old oaks up by the proud baronial castle, where creeping plants trailed over the hard blocks of stone; sweeter far was the fragrance of the apple-blossoms there than in the Danish land. He felt this strongly, bitterly; a large bright tear trickled forth; by its light he seemed to see two children at play, a boy and a girl. The boy had red cheeks, curling yellow hair, and honest blue eyes; he was little Anthony, the rich trader's son, himself, in fact. The little girl had brown eyes and black hair, and the expression of her face was both bold and clever; she was the burgomaster's daughter, Maddalena. The two children were playing with an apple, shaking it and listening to the pips rattling inside; then they cut it in half, and between them ate it up all but one kernel, which the little girl proposed to put into the ground. "Then you will see what will come of it! something you would never fancy, only not directly. A whole apple-tree! think of that." And they planted it in a flower-pot, both very zealous in the work, the boy hollowing out a bed for it in the mould with his fingers, the little girl laying it in, and then both together smoothed the earth over it. "You must not take it up again to-morrow to see if it has taken root," she said. "One must never do that! I did so with my flowers, but only twice; I wanted to see if they were growing, I did not know any better, and the flowers died."

The flower-pot was left with Anthony, and he looked at it every morning all through the winter, but still saw nothing but the black mould. Spring came, the sun shone warmly, and now two tiny green leaves peeped forth. "One for me, and one for Maddalena," thought Anthony; "that is charming!" Soon appeared a third leaf — who was that for? Another followed, and another; every week, every day, it grew bigger and bigger; the plant became a tree.

And all this was seen reflected as it were in that single bright tear that flowed forth and vanished so soon; but more

tears like this could gush forth from the fountain, even old Anthony's heart.

Near Eisenach stretches a chain of rocky mountains; one of these has a peculiar round form, and is completely bare of trees, bushes, or grass; it is called the Venus Mountain, for within it dwells Lady Venus, a woman-goddess of heathen times. Every child in Eisenach knows that Lady Venus, or Lady Holle — for she is known by both names — dwells here, and that once she allured into her abode that noble knight, the Tannenhäuser, a "minnesinger" belonging to the minstrel-band at Wartburg.

Anthony and little Maddalena often played near this mountain, and once she said to him, "Anthony, darest thou knock at the mountain and say, 'Lady Venus, Lady Venus, open! Tannenhäuser is here!'" No, Anthony dared not; Maddalena dared. But only the first few words, "Lady Venus, Lady Venus!" did she speak out boldly and loud, the rest seemed to die away on her lips, and Anthony was sure she had not really spoken them out. And yet she had her bold look, just as she had when sometimes she and other little girls met him in the garden and they all wanted to kiss him, because they knew he did not like to be kissed. "I will," she would say, and Anthony never objected to anything she chose to do. She was so pretty, as well as clever and bold. But there are different kinds of beauty. Lady Venus in the mountain was beautiful, folks said, but it was a wild alluring beauty given by the evil spirit; a very different beauty was that of the holy Elizabeth, the pious Thuringian princess, whose deeds of love and mercy were still remembered by the peasantry around. Her picture hung in the chapel, lighted by silver lamps; she was the protecting saint of the country. But Maddalena was not like her.

The apple-tree that the children had planted grew year by year, so that soon it had to be transplanted into the garden; there the dew fell on it, the sun shone warmly on it, and gave it strength to endure the winter. And when winter was past, and spring had returned, it seemed as though it put forth its blossoms purely from joy, because the cold season was gone. And when autumn came, it bore two apples, one for Maddalena, one for Anthony.

And Maddalena grew up quickly, like the apple-tree, and her face was as bright and fresh as its blossoms; but not much longer might Anthony enjoy the sight of his fairest flower. Changes came; Maddalena and her father left their old home for a new one. In our time, by the help of steam, the journey might be made in a few hours, but then it took more than a whole day and night to get from Eisenach to the town which is still called Weimar. When they parted, Maddalena wept as well as Anthony, and she declared she loved him better than all the splendors of Weimar.

One year passed away — two, three years passed away; and in the course of those three years two letters came from her; the first was brought by the carrier, the second by a traveller; the way was long and tedious, with many windings, past different towns.

Often had Anthony and Maddalena listened to the old story of "Tristram and Isolde," and always, when he heard it, had Anthony fancied himself and Maddalena in their case. Only the name of Tristram, meaning "one born in sorrow," suited not him, he thought, neither would he ever be like Tristram in imagining that she whom he loved had forgotten him. That was so unjust! for Isolde never did forget Tristram, and when both were dead, and buried on opposite sides of the church, the lime-trees that sprang from their graves would meet over the church roof, entwining their boughs in flowers and sweet odors. That story was so pretty, yet so sad, Anthony thought; but sad should not be his and Maddalena's history, and then he would whistle a song by Walter von der Vogelweide, the minnesinger. "Under the lime-tree on the heath," it began, and the burden was so pretty.

"Out in the wood, in the quiet dale,
Tandaradai!
Sang so sweetly the nightingale."

This was his favorite song, and O! how he sang and whistled it all through the bright moonlight night as he rode along through the deep hollow way, on the road to Weimar, to pay a visit to Maddalena. He had not been invited; he chose to take her by surprise.

He was welcomed with good cheer and good wine, pleasant

company, a comfortable room and warm bed — and yet it was not as he had pictured it. He understood neither himself nor his friends ; but we can understand it easily ! One can so often stay in a family without taking root in it ; one talks, as one talks in a postchaise ; knows the people, as one can know them on a steamboat ; mutual annoyance increases, one wishes either one's self or one's good neighbor right away. Something of this felt Anthony.

"I am an honest girl," said Maddalena to him, "and I will tell thee the truth. Many things have changed since the time when we were together, a couple of children — changed both within us and without us. We cannot make our hearts keep the same ; it is impossible. Anthony ! I don't want to make thee my enemy — but soon I shall be far away from here. Believe me, I like thee well enough, but love thee, in the way I now know I can love another, that I cannot — I never have loved thee thus ! Thou wilt get reconciled to it. Farewell, Anthony ! "

And Anthony bade her farewell — he took his leave without a tear. The red-hot bar of iron and the frozen bar of iron alike bite the skin off our lips, if we kiss it ; Anthony felt wild with hate now, as before with love.

It did not take Anthony anything like the four-and-twenty hours to ride home to Eisenach, but the poor horse he rode was ruined by his fierce haste. "What matter ? " said he ; " I am ruined, and I will ruin everything that can remind me of her : Lady Venus, the false heathen ! As for the apple-tree, I will tear it up by the roots ; never shall it bloom or bear fruit again !

But the apple-tree was not laid low ; he was himself laid low — brought to his bed by fever. How should he ever be raised up again ? A medicine was sent him, the bitterest that could be found, but with power to brace the sick body and shrinking spirit. For Anthony's father was now no longer the rich merchant. Heavy days of trial stood waiting at the door ; misfortune rushed in ; like a flood it streamed upon the once rich house. The father was now a poor man ; sorrow and anxiety palsied him, and Anthony had soon other things to think of besides love-sorrow and wrath against Maddalena. He had to be father and mother both in the house, to arrange, help, work for his bread.

He went to Bremen, and there endured many dreary days of hunger and bitterness, and these either harden or soften the heart. How different was the world of real men and women from the world he had imagined in his childhood! What now to him were the strains of the minnesingers? Mere moonshine! So he felt sometimes, but sometimes also the old songs he had been wont to love seemed to echo in his soul and did him good, made him gentler and more submissive. "God's will is best," he would then say within himself. "Good was it that our Lord would not suffer Maddalena's heart to cling to me, for where would it have ended, now that fortune has turned against me? I am glad she gave me up before she had heard of this change. Our Lord has been merciful toward me; all has been for the best, all things are ordered wisely. And she could not help herself; I was unjust to feel so bitter and wrathful!"

Years went on; Anthony's father was dead, and strangers now dwelt in the old house where he was born. Yet Anthony was to see his home once more, for his rich master sent him on a journey that obliged him to pass through Eisenach. Old Wartburg stood unchanged on the rock; the great oak-trees kept their places, the Venus Mountain gleamed gray in its barrenness, as of old. These words sprang to Anthony's lips: "Lady Venus! Lady Venus! open the mountain and take me in! then I shall at least stay in my own land!"

It was a sinful thought, and he hastily crossed himself. A little bird was singing from a bush close by; it reminded him of the old song, —

"Far in the wood, in the quiet dale,
Tandaradai!
How sweetly sang the nightingale."

It was through a veil of tears that he now again saw the home of his childhood. The house stood exactly as before, but the garden had been laid out afresh, and a road now cut across a corner of the old garden-ground, so that the apple-tree, which he had never destroyed, now stood outside the inclosure. The sun shone on it, and the dew fell on it, as formerly; it bare rich fruit, and bowed its branches almost to the earth. "It thrives!" quoth he; "that's well."

But on closer inspection, he saw that rude hands had broken off one of the largest boughs; the tree stood too near the high-road. "They tear off the blossoms, without one word of thanks; they steal the fruit and break off the branches; one might repeat concerning this tree, as concerning many a human being,—

"'At this tree's cradle who could say
That such would be its fate one day?'

Its history began so prettily, and now it is forsaken and forgotten, a garden-tree by the high-road! quite out of place, and ill-treated thus! Well, it will not pine away and die, but every year the blossoms will be fewer, and of fruit there will soon be none — no matter, the history will not be a long one!"

Such were Anthony's musings under the apple-tree, and very similar were his nightly thoughts in the tiny, lonesome chamber in the Street of Small Houses, in the foreign Danish land, whither his rich master, a merchant of Bremen, had sent him, under condition that he was not to marry. "Marry, indeed! ho, ho!" and he laughed a strange inward laugh.

The winter came early one year, a sharp frost set in, and a violent snow-storm kept every one in-doors who was not obliged to go out. Thus it happened that Anthony's neighbors took no note of his booth having been shut up for two whole days. During those two days old Anthony had never left his bed; he had not the strength, and the intense cold had benumbed his limbs. All forsaken lay the old bachelor; he could not help himself, he could only just reach the water pitcher beside his bed, and now the last drop had been exhausted. It was not fever, it was not sickness; it was old age that had prostrated him thus. It was almost continual night around him, for the days were dark and gray, and his window was not like a glass window. A little spider, unseen, unknown to him, spun contentedly and diligently her web over him, as though to prepare a little fine new crape for mourning, in case the old man's eyes should close in death.

Long and dreary were the hours; tears had he none, neither had he pain. Maddalena was no longer in his thoughts; he felt that the tumult of the world was past for him, that he

lay somewhere beyond it, that no one thought of him. For a while he seemed to feel hunger and thirst — O! that was painful! but no one came to help him — no one would come. He thought on others who had suffered the like; he remembered the patron saint of his birthplace, the gentle St. Elizabeth, who, when her people were pining because of the famine, went about bringing help and refreshment to the sick. He remembered the pious words of hope and trust in God that she had been wont to speak to those poor sufferers; how she had bathed their wounds and brought food to the hungry, although her stern husband forbade her with angry words. He remembered the legend, how as she glided along with a basket well-packed with bread and meat, her husband, who was watching her footsteps, suddenly stepped forward and asked in wrath, "what it was she carried in her basket?" And she replied in terror: "These are roses I have gathered in the garden;" whereupon he tore back the cloth laid over the basket, and lo! a miracle! for bread and meat were changed into the loveliest roses!

Thus lived the gentle Duchess of Thuringia in old Anthony's thoughts, thus she stood vividly before his failing eyesight, beside his bed in the miserable wooden booth in the strangers' land. He uncovered his head, looked into her kind eyes, and all around him sprang up a bower of sweet roses, so fair to look on, and so fragrant! And now he was conscious of another, a different perfume; a flowering apple-tree stood before him, the same that he and little Maddalena had planted.

And the tree drooped its fragrant petals upon his hot forehead, and their touch cooled it; they fell upon his thirsting lips, and seemed to strengthen him like wine; they drooped upon his breast, and he felt so much easier.

"Now I shall fall asleep," said he to himself. "Sleep will do me so much good, I shall get up to-morrow all right again. O, how beautiful! The apple-tree planted in love! I see it now in glory!" And he fell asleep.

The next day — it was the third day that his booth had been shut up — the snow ceased, and old Anthony's opposite neighbor came to look after him. There he lay, stretched out

dead, holding his old nightcap between his clasped hands. But another was found laid by, white and clean, ready for him to wear in his coffin.

And where were now the tears he had shed! where were the pearls? They were left in his nightcap — the genuine ones do not get lost in the washing — with the cap they remained; the old thoughts, the old dreams, all were left in the old bachelor's nightcap. Never wish such a one for thyself! it will make thy forehead too hot, thy pulse to beat too fast, will bring dreams as vivid as reality. This was experienced by the burgomaster, who, fifty years after old Anthony's death, chanced to put his nightcap on; he was a comfortable, well-to-do man, with a wife and eleven children; nevertheless, he dreamt straightway of unrequited love, bankruptcy, and hard fare.

"Ugh! how hot this nightcap makes one!" he exclaimed, and tore it off. One pearl after another trickled down and glittered before his eyes. "I must be ill!" declared the burgomaster; "my eyes feel quite dazzled! Can this be gout, I wonder?"

He knew not that what he saw were tears, shed half a year hundred years ago, — shed by old Anthony of Eisenach.

As for the visions and dreams of those several unhappy ones who have worn the nightcap since, we will leave others to tell the tale, or rather the tales, for there must be many of them; we have now told the first, and with these words we conclude: — Never wish for thyself the old bachelor's night-cap.

LUCK MAY LIE IN A PIN.

NOW I am going to tell a story about Luck. All of us are acquainted with Luck: there are those that see her all the time, some only at certain times of the year, others only one single day, — yes, there are even people that only see Luck once in their life-time; but all of us do see her.

I suppose I need not tell you that when our Lord sends a little child here, He lays it in a mother's lap: this may happen in a rich man's castle, or in a workingman's nicely ordered room; but then it may happen instead in an open market-place, where the cold wind blows. But what not every one of you does know, and yet is really true, is that our Lord, when He places a child here, also sends along with it its good Luck, which, however, is never placed near by, but is hidden in some spot on our globe, where we look for it least; yet it is always found at last, and that is a comfort.

Luck once was placed in an apple; that was for a man whose name was Newton. The apple fell, and thus he found his Luck. If you do not know that story, ask some one to tell it to you. We have another story to tell — a story about a pear.

There once lived a poor man, who was born poor, and had grown up poor, and was poor when he married. He was a turner by trade, and used to turn umbrella-handles and umbrella-rings, but he only earned enough money by this to live from hand to mouth.

"I shall never find *my* Luck," said he.

Now this is a true story, which really happened. I could tell the name of the country and the place where the man lived, but that is of no consequence. The red and sour mountain-ash berries blossomed and ripened around his house and in his garden, as if they were the choicest fruit, and in the garden stood also a pear-tree, but it never had borne a pear, and yet there Luck was placed in an invisible pear.

One night the wind blew terribly. In Avize, men said the great Dillig boulder was lifted up from the side of the road, and thrown down like a lump of clay, and so it was not at all wonderful that a big branch should have been broken from the pear-tree. The branch was taken into the workshop, and the man turned out of it, just for fun, a big pear, and another big pear, then a smaller pear, and then several very small pears.

"The tree shall bear pears once at least," he said, and gave them to the children to play with.

There are some things that are necessities in life, and among these, most certainly in wet countries, are umbrellas. Now the whole family had only one for general use. When the wind blew very hard, the umbrella would turn over, and sometimes it would break; but the man quickly mended it again, — that was in his trade. With the button and string that kept the umbrella together, it went worse; it would always break too soon, just as one was folding the umbrella up.

One day, when the button had broken again, and the man hunted in vain for it on the floor, he happened to get hold of one of the smallest pears which he had turned, and had given to the children to play with.

"I cannot find the button," said the man, "but this little thing will answer." He pulled a small cord through it, and the little pear filled the place of the broken button beautifully; it was exactly right, and formed the best of fasteners. The next time that he had to send umbrella handles and rings to the capital, he added to the number a few of the small wooden pears which he had turned. They were fastened to a few new umbrellas, which were sent with a thousand others to America. They have a quick understanding there of what is of use. The little pear was soon found to hold best, and the umbrella merchant gave orders, that all the umbrellas to be sent to him after that should be fastened with a little wooden pear. Large orders were to be supplied, thousands of pears to be made; wooden pears on all umbrellas, and our man was kept busy at work. He turned and turned; the whole pear-tree was used for little wooden pears, which brought shillings that grew into dollars.

"In that pear-tree my Luck was placed, said the man; and

soon after he had a great workshop, with plenty of women and boys to help him. Now he was all the time in good humor, and often used to say, — " Luck may lie in a pin."

So also says he who tells the story ; and you should know that it is true, and is a proverb in Denmark, that if you put a white pin in your mouth, you will be invisible ; but it must be the right sort of a pin, — one given by our Lord. I have had one of them ; and whenever I come to America, the land of the New World, which is so far off, and yet so near me, I shall always carry that pin with me. I can send my greeting over in a few minutes ; the ocean rolls over to its shores, there the wind blows ; any day I can be there when my stories are read, and perhaps see the glittering gold receive the ringing gold, — the gold that is best of all, which shines in the eyes of children, and comes ringing from their lips, and the lips of their parents. I am in the very room with my friends, — and yet I am invisible. I have the white pin in my mouth.

Yes, Luck may lie in a pin.

"SOMETHING."

"I WILL be Something," declared the eldest of five brothers; "I will be of use in the world; be it ever so humble a position that I may hold, let me be but useful, and that will be Something. I will make bricks; folk cannot do without them, so I shall at least do something."

"Something very little, though," replied the second brother. "Why, it is as good as nothing! it is work that might be done by a machine. Better be a mason, as I intend to be. Then one belongs to a guild, becomes a citizen, has a banner of one's own. Nay, if all things go well, I may become a master, and have apprentices and workmen under me. That will be Something!"

"It will be nothing at all then, I can tell you that!" rejoined the third. "Think how many different ranks there are in a town far above that of a master-mason. You may be an honest sort of a man, but you will never be a gentleman; gentle and simple; those are the two grand divisions, and you will always be one of the 'simple.' Well, I know better than that. I will be an architect; I will be one of the thinkers, the artists; I will raise myself to the aristocracy of intellect. I may have to begin from the very lowest grade; I may begin as a carpenter's boy, and run about with a paper-cap on my head, to fetch ale for the workmen; I may not enjoy it, but I shall try to imagine it is only a masquerade. 'To-morrow,' I shall say, 'I will go my own way, and others shall not come near me.' Yes, I shall go to the Academy, learn to draw, and be called an architect. That will be Something! I may get a title, perhaps; and I shall build and build, as others before me have done. Yes, that will be Something!"

"But it is Something that I care nothing about," said the fourth. "I should not care to go on, on, in the beaten track, to be a mere copyist; I will be a genius, cleverer than all of

you put together; I will create a new style, provide ideas for buildings suited to the climate and materials of our country, suited to our national character, and the requirements of the age."

"But supposing the climate and the materials don't agree?" suggested the fifth, "how will you get on then, if they won't coöperate? As for our national character, to be following out that in architecture will be sheer affectation, and the requirements of modern civilization will drive you perfectly mad. I see you will none of you ever be anything, though of course you won't believe me. But do as you please, I shall not be like you. I shall reason over what you execute; there is something ridiculous in everything; I shall find it out, show you your faults — that will be Something!"

And he kept his word; and folk said of this fifth brother, "There is something in him, certainly; he has plenty of brains! but he does nothing." But he was content, he was Something.

But what became of the five brothers? We will hear the whole.

The eldest brother, the brick-maker, found that every brick he turned out whole yielded him a tiny copper coin — only copper — but a great many of these small coins, added together, could be converted into a bright silver dollar, and through the power of this, wheresoever he knocked, whether at baker's, butcher's, or tailor's, the door flew open, and he received what he wanted. Such was the virtue of his bricks; some, of course, got broken before they were finished, but a use was found even for these. For up by the trench would poor Mother Margaret fain build herself a little house, if she might; she took all the broken bricks, aye, and she got a few whole ones besides, for a good heart had the eldest brother, though only a brick-maker. The poor thing built her house with her own hands; it was very narrow, its one window was all on one side, the door was too low, and the thatch on the roof might have been laid on better, but it gave her shelter and a home, and could be seen far over the sea, which sometimes burst over the trench in its might, and sprinkled a salt shower over the little house, which kept its place there years after he who made the bricks was dead and gone.

As for the second brother, he learned to build after another fashion, as he had resolved. When he was out of his apprenticeship, he buckled on his knapsack, and started, singing as he went, on his travels. He came home again, and became a master in his native town; he built, house after house, a whole street of houses; there they stood, looked well, and were a credit to the town; and these houses soon built him a little house for himself. How? Ask the houses, and they will give you no answer; but the people will answer you and say, "Why, of course, the street built him his house!" It was small enough, and had only a clay floor, but when he and his bride danced over it, the floor grew as smooth as if it had been polished, and from every stone in the wall sprung a flower, that looked as gay as the costliest tapestry. It was a pretty house and a happy wedded pair. The banner of the Masons' Guild waved outside, and workmen and apprentices shouted "Hurra!" Yes, that was Something! and at last he died — that, too, was Something!

Next comes the architect, the third brother. He began as a carpenter's apprentice, and ran about the town on errands, wearing a paper-cap; but he studied industriously at the Academy, and rose steadily upward. If the street full of houses had built a house for his brother the mason, the street took its name from the architect; the handsomest house in the whole street was his — that was Something, and he was Something! His children were gentlemen, and could boast of their "birth;" and when he died, his widow was a widow of condition — that is Something — and his name stood on the corner of the street, and was in everybody's lips — that is Something, too!

Now for the genius, the fourth brother, who wanted to invent something new, something original. Somehow, the ground gave way beneath his feet; he fell and broke his neck. But he had a splendid funeral, with music and banners, and flowery paragraphs in the newspapers; and three eulogiums were pronounced over him, each longer than the last, and this would have pleased him mightily, for he loved speechifying of all things. A monument was erected over his grave, only one story high — but that is Something!

So now he was dead, as well as his three elder brothers; the youngest, the critic, outlived them all, and that was as it should be, for thus he had the last word, which to him was a matter of the greatest importance. "He had plenty of brains," folk said. Now his hour had struck, he died, and his soul sought the gates of heaven. There it stood side by side with another soul — old Mother Margaret from the trenches.

"It is for the sake of contrast, I suppose, that I and this miserable soul should wait here together," thought the critic. "Well now, who are you, my good woman?" he inquired.

And the old woman replied, with as much respect as though St. Peter himself were addressing her, — in fact, she took him for St. Peter, he gave himself such grand airs, — "I am a poor old soul, I have no family, I am only old Margaret from the house near the trenches."

"Well, and what have you done down below?"

"I have done as good as nothing in the world! nothing whatever! It will be mercy, indeed, if such as I am suffered to pass through this gate."

"And how did you leave the world?" inquired the critic, carelessly. He must talk about something; it wearied him to stand there, waiting.

"Well, I can hardly tell how I left it; I have been sickly enough during these last few years, and could not well bear to creep out of bed at all during the cold weather. It has been a severe winter, but now that is all past. For a few days, as your highness must know, the wind was quite still, but it was bitterly cold; the ice lay over the water as far as one could see. All the people in the town were out on the ice; there was dancing, and music, and feasting, and sledge-racing, I fancy; I could hear something of it all as I lay in my poor little chamber. And when it was getting toward evening, the moon was up, but was not yet very bright; I looked from my bed through the window, and I saw how there rose up over the sea a strange white cloud; I lay and watched it, watched the black dot in it, which grew bigger and bigger, and then I knew what it foreboded; that sign is not often seen, but I am old and experienced. I knew it, and I shivered with horror! Twice before in my life have I seen that sign, and I knew that

there would be a terrible storm and a spring flood; it would burst over the poor things on the ice, who were drinking, and dancing, and merry-making. Young and old, the whole town was out on the ice; who was to warn them, if no one saw it, or no one knew what I knew? I felt so terrified, I felt all alive, as I had not felt for years! I got out of bed, forced the window open; I could see the folk running and dancing over the ice; I could see the gay-colored flags, I could hear the boys shout 'Hurra!' and the girls and lads a-singing. All were so merry; and all the time the white cloud with its black speck rose higher and higher! I screamed as loud as I could; but no one heard me, I was too far off. Soon would the storm break loose, the ice would break in pieces, and all that crowd would sink and drown. Hear me they could not; get out to them I could not; what was to be done? Then our Lord sent me a good thought; I could set fire to my bed; better let my house be burnt to the ground, than that so many should miserably perish. So I kindled a light; I saw the red flame mount up; I got out at the door, but then I fell down; I lay there, I could not get up again. But the flames burst out through the window and over the roof; they saw it down below, and they all ran as fast as they could to help me; the poor old crone they believed would be burnt; there was not one who did not come to help me. I heard them come, and I heard, too, such a rustling in the air, and then a thundering as of heavy cannon-shots, for the spring-flood was loosening the ice, and it all broke up. But the folk were all come off it to the trenches, where the sparks were flying about me; I had them all safe. But I could not bear the cold and the fright, and that is how I have come up here. Can the gates of heaven be opened to such a poor old creature as I? I have no house now at the trenches; where can I go, if they refuse me here?"

Then the gates opened, and the Angel bade poor Margaret enter. As she passed the threshold, she dropped a blade of straw — straw from her bed — that bed which she had set alight to save the people on the ice, and lo! it had changed into gold! dazzling gold! yet flexible withal, and twisting into various forms.

"Look, that was what yonder poor woman brought," said the Angel. "But what dost thou bring? Truly, I know well that thou hast done nothing, not even made bricks. It is a pity thou canst not go back again to fetch at least one brick — not that it is good for anything when it is made, no, but because anything, the very least, done with a good-will, is Something. But thou mayst not go back, and I can do nothing for thee."

Then poor Margaret pleaded for him thus: "His brother gave me all the bricks and broken bits wherewith I built my poor little house — that was a great kindness toward a poor old soul like me! May not all those bits and fragments, put together, be reckoned as one brick for him? It will be an act of mercy; he needs it, and this is the home of mercy."

"To thy brother, whom thou didst despise," said the Angel, "to him whose calling, in respect of worldly honor, was the lowest, shalt thou owe this mite of heavenly coin. Thou shalt not be sent away; thou shalt have leave to stand here without, and think over thy manner of life down below. But within thou canst not enter, until thou hast done something that is good — Something!"

"I fancy I could have expressed that better," thought the critic; but he did not say it aloud, and that was already — Something!

THE WIND'S TALE

CONCERNING WALDEMAR DAAE AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

WHEN the wind passes over the grass, the grass ripples like a lake; when it passes over the corn, the corn curls into waves like the sea; this is the wind's dance. But the Wind can do more than this; only listen to his loud chant amid the trees of the wood, to his shrill wail amid the crannies, crevices, and sounding-holes of old walls; watch how he chases the white fleecy clouds like a flock of sheep across the sky; mark how he howls through the open portal, as though he were the warder blowing his horn. Then again, how wondrously he whistles through the chimney; the fire in the hearth beneath flames up and blazes, and it is right pleasant and comfortable to sit in the chamber warmed by its bright glow and listen to stories. Let the Wind be the story-teller; he knows more wonderful tales and histories than all of us put together. Now he begins; "Whew, whew, whew! on, on, on!" such is the burden of his song.

"Near the Great Belt" — so begins the Wind — "there stands an old mansion with thick red walls. I know every stone of it; I knew those stones of old time when they sat in Marshal Stig's castle on the promontory; they had to come down thence, but they were built up again to form a new wall, a new mansion — even Borreby Hall as it stands to this day. I have seen and known all the high-born men and women of different families who have dwelt therein. To-night my tale is of Waldemar Daae and his daughters.

"He walked so erect, he was of royal race! he knew more than how to hunt the stag and empty a flagon; he was a man of science. His lady-wife trod daintily in a kirtle of cloth-of-gold over her floors of polished mosaic. Splendid carpets, costly furniture, cunningly carved, surrounded her; silver and

gold both had she brought into the house; the cellars were full; proud black horses neighed in the stables; Borreby Hall was then the abode of wealth. There were three children, three fair maidens — I still remember their names — Ida, Joanna, and Anna Dorothea. These were rich folk, grand folk, born and lapped in luxury. Whew, whew, whew! on, on, on!" whistled the Wind, and then he continued his tale.

"Here I saw not, as in other old mansions, the high-born mistress sitting in the great hall turning the spinning-wheel among her maidens. No, her fingers flew over the lute-strings, and her voice sang not often the good old Danish songs, but ditties in divers tongues from other lands. Here all was life and gayety, guests came from far and wide, the voices of music and revelry were so loud I could not drown them," quoth the Wind. "Here was pride, boasting, and bragging, — not our Lord's blessing.

"I remember once on the eve of May-day I came from the west; I had seen ships wrecked on the coast of West Jutland, I had hunted across the heath and the wooded shore over to Fünen, and now passed raving and roaring over the Great Belt. I lay down to rest on the coast of Zealand, close by Borreby Hall, where the beautiful oak forest still grew. The young lads of the neighborhood came out to collect boughs and twigs, the biggest and driest they could find; they carried them into the town, laid them in heaps, set fire to them, and youths and maidens danced round, singing the while. I lay very still; just softly I touched one bough that had been thrown down by the handsomest lad among them; forthwith, his heap of wood blazed up the highest of all; thus he became the leader, the chosen bachelor, and he won the privilege of choosing first out of all the young girls one to be his own little May-lamb. It was so merry among those simple folks! so much happier were they than the great people in Borreby Hall. And then came driving toward the hall, in a gilt carriage with six horses, the noble lady herself and her three daughters — so fair, so young, three sweet blossoms, the rose, the lily, and the pale hyacinth. Their mother was like a splendid tulip; she bestowed not one word of greeting upon

the peasants, who broke off their game and bowed and courtesied around her; stiff like a tulip she held herself. Rose, lily, and pale hyacinth, I saw them all three; whose Maylambs should they be? I wondered. Their bachelors would surely be proud knights, perhaps princes. Whew, whew, whew! on, on, on!

"Well, the carriage rattled past and the peasants resumed their dance. But that same night, when I rose up from rest," quoth the Wind, "that high-born lady had laid herself down never to rise again; that had come to her which comes to all mortals. Grave and thoughtful stood Waldemar Daae; 'the proudest tree may be bowed, but not broken,' that seemed his feeling. The daughters wept, as Fru Daae was borne hence, and I passed hence. Whew, whew, whew!" whistled the Wind.

. . . . . .

"I came again, I often came again across Fünen and the waters of the Belt, and rested at Borreby in the shelter of the beautiful oak wood. Here ospreys, wood-pigeons, ravens, and even the black storks,[1] build their nests; it was early in the year, some had eggs, and some had young ones. But O, what a flying and crying among them all! for the axe was heard, stroke after stroke, the trees were being laid low. Waldemar Daae had it in his mind to build a ship, a man-of-war with three decks, such as the king would buy, and therefore the wood must fall, the birds lose their homes. The great shrike flew away in terror, for his nest was brought low; the osprey and many another bird wheeled round and round, screaming and screeching in their wrath and their agony; I understood them well enough. And crows and jackdaws shrieked in mockery, 'Caw, caw! all forlorn! gone and torn! caw, caw!'

"In the middle of the wood amid the flock of work-people stood Waldemar Daae and his three daughters. They were laughing at the wild cries of the birds, all but the youngest, Anna Dorothea; she was tender-hearted; and when a very old tree, on whose bare boughs a black stork had his nest, was to be felled, it grieved her so much to see the poor helpless young

[1] The black stork, unlike his sociable relatives, shuns the abodes of men, and dwells in woods.

ones putting their heads out, that she begged with tears in her eyes that this one tree might be spared. So it was left for the black stork; that was but a trifle.

"There was hewing and sawing, and at last the three-decked ship was built. The ship-builder was a fine looking fellow, though of mean birth; his eyes sparkled with life and his forehead worked with thought. Waldemar Daae liked well to hear him talk, and so did little Ida, his eldest daughter, now fifteen years old. And whilst he built the ship for her father he built many an aëry castle besides, wherein he and little Ida sat as man and wife, which might have come to pass had the castle been of walled stone, with rampart and moat, garden and pleasure-ground. But with all his cleverness, the builder was only a poor bird, and what had a sparrow to do among a flock of cranes? Whew, whew, whew! I flew away, and he flew away, and little Ida forgot it, as forget she must.

. . . . . .

"In the stable neighed the beautiful black horses. The admiral sent by the king to inspect the new ship-of-war was full of admiration for these glorious creatures. I heard all he said," quoth the Wind. "I followed the gentlemen through the open door and scattered blades of straw about their feet, yellow like gold. Gold! that was what Waldemar Daae wanted, and the admiral wanted the black horses he praised so highly; but their talking came to nought, the horses were not bought, neither was the ship; it was left on the shore, a Noah's ark, never to float on the water. Whew, whew, whew! it was a pity!

"In winter time when the fields were covered with snow, and drifts of ice choked up the Belt," continued the Wind, "there came ravens and crows, whole flocks of the black creatures, and they perched about on the solitary ship standing empty on the strand, and screamed hoarse tales about the oak wood that had been cut down, about the numberless happy nests that had been destroyed, the frantic old birds and homeless young ones, and all for the sake of this great piece of useless lumber, the immense vessel that was never to sail upon the sea. And I tossed and whirled the snow till it

lay thickly around it and over it; I made it hear my voice, I taught it all that a storm has to say; I know I did my part as to teaching it a ship's experience of life. Whew, whew, whew! on, on, on!

"And winter passed away, summer passed away, as they pass away still, as the snow melts, as the leaf drifts, as the apple-blossom fades, away, away, away!

"But still the daughters were young. Little Ida was a blooming rose still, as when the ship-builder had seen her. Often did I take hold of her long brown hair, as she stood thoughtfully beside the apple-tree in the garden, never heeding that I shook the delicate petals down upon her loose curls, looking at the red sunset and the streak of golden sky behind the dark bushes and trees. Her sister Joanna was like a lily, white and slender, tall and straight, stiff upon her stalk like her mother. She loved to linger in the great hall, where hung the portraits of their ancestors, — ladies clad in silk and velvet, tiny hats embroidered with pearls set upon their braided hair; beautiful ladies, those! while their husbands were seen cased in steel, or wearing rich mantles lined with squirrel fur, and stiff ruffs, their swords fastened to their thighs — not round the waist. I could see that Joanna often fancied how her own and her husband's portrait would look on those same walls. I found that out as I careered through the long gallery into the hall and turned round again. Anna Dorothea, the pale hyacinth, still a child of fourteen, was very silent and quiet; her large blue eyes were full of thought, the childish smile still lingered on her lips; I could not, and I would not, have blown it away. I met her in the garden, in the hollow, and on the high hills, gathering flowers and herbs, such as she knew her father might use in the wondrous potions and mixtures he was wont to prepare. For Waldemar Daae, though such a haughty noble, was also skilled in many an art unknown to the multitude. Fire burned in his study hearth summer as well as winter, his chamber door was always locked, he worked night and day, never speaking of his labors; for he knew that the secrets of nature must be wooed in secret, and he sought the mightiest, most hidden secret of all — how to produce gold — red gold.

"I knew, I was there," sang the Wind; "I whistled through the chimney while all that blazing and burning and refining was going on. What came of it? Dust and smoke; cinders and ashes! Whew, whew, whew!

"Those magnificent horses — what had become of them? The old gold and silver vessels, the cattle in the meadows — where were they gone? Why, all these could melt — melt in the crucible — and yet no gold might come of it. Barn and granary, cellar and pantry, now were empty; the house held fewer folk, more mice. One pane broke, another cracked; I had no need to go round by the door in order to enter," quoth the Wind; "the chimney smoked, indeed, but not for cooking dinner, only for cooking the red gold.

"I blew through the portal, like the warder blowing his horn," continued the Wind; "but warder here there was none; I turned the weather-cock round and round. Rats and mice peopled the hall; poverty covered the table; poverty filled wardrobe and larder; the doors came off their hinges; chinks and crevices were there in plenty; I went in and went out at my own pleasure.

"Amid smoke and ashes, sorrow and sleeplessness, Waldemar's hair and beard turned gray, his skin grew thick and yellowish, his eyes so greedy after gold — the long-expected gold!

"I puffed dust and smoke into his face, into his beard. I whistled through the broken panes and crevices, blew into his daughters' beds, under their threadbare clothing. Such a song as this was never sung at their cradles, poor dears! but save myself, no one now sang any song at all in the old hall," quoth the Wind. "I snowed them in; other folk might have called it good fun; but they, they had no fire-wood; the oaks, whence they had been wont to fetch it, were all felled. There came a sharp frost; I sprang through peep-holes and passages, over walls and gables, to keep myself nimble; the nobly-born damsels lay in bed for the cold, their father crept under a covering of skins. Nothing to eat, nothing to burn!

"A lesson hard had they to learn!

"Whew, whew, whew! But Waldemar Daae could not learn. 'After winter follows spring,' quoth he; 'after trouble comes

the good time ; only we must wait, wait ! Now is the worst, but by Easter we must have gold.' And then I saw him watch the spider at work, and heard him mutter, 'Good, diligent little weaver, thou teachest me to persevere. Thy web may be broken, but thou beginnest afresh ; again it is torn asunder ! no matter, undismayed thou returnest again and again to thy work, and thou art rewarded at last !"

"Easter morning came, the bells were ringing, the sun shone. In feverish heat he had awaked ; he had boiled and seethed, distilled and mingled. I heard him sighing like a lost soul, I heard him pray, I felt that he held his breath. The lamp had gone out — of that he took no heed ; I blew up the coals into a flame ; it shone upon his face, which was white as chalk, it lighted up those hollow eyes. But all at once those hollow eyes dilated and sparkled. Behold, the alchemistic glass ! it glitters, glowing, pure, and heavy ; he lifted it with trembling hand, he cried with faltering tongue, 'Gold, gold !' He turned dizzy ; I could have blown him down where he stood, but I only blew upon the live coals, and followed him through the door into his daughters' sleeping-room, where they lay shivering in bed. Ashes clung to his beard, hung about his dress, and lay amid his matted hair. He stood so erect, lifted on high his treasure in the frail glass, 'Found, found ! gold !' he cried, and his glass glistened in the sunbeams as he held it aloft, when, lo ! his hand shook, and the alchemist's glass fell to the floor, and shivered into a thousand fragments ! His last bubble had burst ! Whew, whew, whew ! On, on, on ! and I went on, away from the alchemist's home.

"Late in the year, in the short days, when the mist comes and flings wet drops upon the red berries and leafless boughs, I came back in a brisk humor, swept the heavens clean, and broke off the rotten boughs ; that is no great labor, certainly, but it has to be done. And there was, meantime, sweeping out and clearing out after another fashion in Borreby Hall. For Waldemar Daae's old enemy, Ove Ramel, was now to be lord and master in his old home. I drummed upon the broken panes, beat against the ruined doors, whistled through creeks and chinks ; Master Ove should not find it pleasant when he

came. Ida and Anna Dorothea wept quietly ; Joanna stood pale and stately, and bit her finger till it bled ; but that did no good. Ove Ramel graciously offered that Herre Daae should remain in the hall during his life-time, but he got no thanks for the proposal. I listened, and I marked how the homeless nobleman reared his head more haughtily than ever. I went out and flung a bit of the roof upon the old lime-trees, and broke the thickest bough among them, and it was not a rotten one either ; there it lay at the gate, like a broom for sweeping out — and sweeping out there was with a vengeance. But I had expected it.

"O, that was a day of bitterness — a heavy day! But the neck was stiff, and the back was stout ; the proud man bore his burden bravely.

"Nought had they left save the very clothes they wore, and the newly-bought alchemistic glass, filled with the brittle treasure that had promised so fairly — the delusive gold scraped up from the floor ; this Waldemar Daae hid within his breast. He took his cap in his hand, and the once rich, gay gentleman, passed with his three daughters out of Borreby Hall. I blew cold upon his hot cheeks, I flapped his gray beard and long white hair to and fro, I sang, as loud as I could, Whew, whew, whew! Here was an end of his glory. Ida and Anna Dorothea walked one on each side of him ; Joanna turned back as she crossed the portal ; perhaps, as she gazed so wistfully at the red stones that had once girt Marshal Stig's castle, she remembered the old ballad of 'Marshal Stig's Daughters,' —

> "'The elder took the younger by the hand,
> And forth they passed into a foreign land.'

"But here the daughters were three, and their father was with them, and they were not going far. They turned aside from the high-road, where they had been wont to drive in their carriage, and bent their steps to Smidstrup Field, to a little mud cottage that they had hired for ten marks a year. This was their new home, with its bare walls and empty chambers. Crows and jackdaws flew over their heads, and screamed, as if in mockery, 'Gone and torn! all forlorn! caw, caw!' as they had screamed in Borreby Wood when the oaks were

felled. Herre Daae and his daughters must have understood, but it was not a pleasant song to hear, so I blew about their ears and did my best to drown it.

"And so they passed into the mud cottage on Smidstrup Field, and I passed away over field and furrow, bare hedges and leafless woods; away, away, over open waters, to distant lands — whew, whew, whew! Farewell, farewell!"

. . . . . .

And how did it fare with Waldemar Daae and his daughters? The Wind will tell us if we listen.

"The last time I went to look in at them I found only one; it was Anna Dorothea, the pale hyacinth; she was then old and bowed; fifty years had elapsed since she had left Borreby Hall; she outlived her sisters.

"Across the heath, near the town of Viborg, stood the dean's handsome new house, with its red stones and pointed gables, and its chimneys always smoking. The gentle lady and her fair daughters were looking out from the balcony across the garden and the brown heath beyond; looking at what? Looking at the stork's nest on yonder half-ruined cottage. Houseleek and moss, they made up most of the roof; but the hovel had some shelter afforded it by the stork's nest, which, of course, the stork was careful to keep in good repair.

"It was a house to look at, not to touch," quoth the Wind, "I had to pass by it very softly. For the sake of the stork's nest that hut got leave to stay there; it was certainly no credit to the heath. The dean would not drive away the stork, so the poor old maid had permission to stay and shelter herself as best she could; for that she might thank the quaint Egyptian bird; or was it because she had, years ago, pleaded for the nest of his wild black brother in Borreby Wood? At that time she was a happy child, a delicate pale hyacinth in the garden of her ancestral home. She remembered it well; Anna Dorothea forgot nothing.

"'Alas!' she sighed — for human beings can sigh almost as sadly as I myself sigh amongst reeds and rushes — 'alas! no bells were rung at thy funeral, Waldemar Daae! no bands of school children sang psalms when Borreby's rightful mas-

ter was laid in the earth! How everything comes to an end! yes, misery as well as greatness, thank Heaven! That my sister Ida should become a peasant's wife, that grieved my father worst of all. But now he is at peace in the grave, and thou art with him, Ida! O yes, it is well with them both at last. But I am left alone, old, and poor, and weak; my Saviour, do not Thou forsake me! supply my need, my wretchedness, out of thine abundance! make this world's riddles clear to me!'

"Such was Anna Dorothea's prayer in the miserable mud hovel that was suffered to stand for the stork's sake.

"The boldest, most resolute spirit among the three sisters, I carried off myself," quoth the Wind.

"'She cut her clothes below her knee,
And as a lad she went to sea.'

"She bore herself as a sailor-boy, and took wages from the captain of a ship; she was sparing of speech, sour of mien, quick at work, only she could not climb the mast. And so I blew her overboard, before any one found out that she was a woman; and I think that was well done!" declared the Wind.

. . . . . .

"It was an Easter morning — bright as the morning when Waldemar Daae believed he had found the red gold. Under the stork's nest, among those tumble-down walls, I heard a faint voice chanting a psalm. It was Anna Dorothea's last hymn.

"There was no glass window, only a hole in the wall; the Sun set himself therein, like a lump of gold, and as she gazed on his brightness her heart broke, her eyes grew fixed. The stork gave her shelter unto the day of her death. I sang at her funeral," said the Wind; "I sang at her father's, too; I know where is his grave and hers: no one else cares to know.

"New times are come, the old highway is lost among the fields, old cemeteries have been leveled into new roads, and soon will come the steam, with its row of carriages, and rush over the old forgotten graves of unknown ancestors. Whew, whew, whew!

"And this is the history of Waldemar Daae and his daugh-

ters, and it is all true. Tell it better, you people, if you can," challenged the Wind, and veered round.

He was gone.[1]

[1] "In the southwest of Zealand lie two old castles, Basnaes and Borreby Hall. Between the respective owners of these there was wont, in olden time, to be incessant rivalry. On the portal of Basnaes may still be read the old rhyme,

"'The eagle in lofty hold doth rest,
Envy beneath in the vale makes his nest.'

"Concerning Borreby Hall, it is related that a part of it was built from the ruins of Marshal Stig's castle, which stood on Stig's Naes, or promontory, not far off. . . . . On the left side of the main building of Borreby Hall there were formerly two arches, and in the arch in the place whereof now stands the staircase, there was what was called the Record Room. This last contained three large iron chests filled with letters and manuscripts, among them many referring to state affairs; but as the key was always left in the door, these papers in time got dispersed, and at last Peter Rosenmeier, the steward, had the chests broken in pieces and the iron made into horseshoes. From the ceiling in this chamber hung a bell, the original purpose whereof none could divine, but concerning it was known that when Herre Christian Frus lay dying, he told his wife, Mette Hardenberg, that when she should hear the bell in the Record Room give out a peal, she must prepare to follow him into the grave. And even so it came to pass, for some years later, when Fru Mette sat one evening playing at cards with other ladies, the bell from the Record Room was heard to ring, and she laid the cards aside, saying, 'Now is my death very nigh,' and shortly afterward she died. Borreby Hall was then sold to Admiral Claus Daae, who bequeathed it to his two sons, Christian and Waldemar. And after these two had disputed for some time concerning their inheritance, they agreed to share the hall and the lands thereto belonging after this fashion; Waldemar was to have the main building, erecting for himself what outhouses he required, whilst his brother was to retain the keep and the outhouses. So Waldemar had the great hall, and built his own outhouses on the further side of the moat; but he soon grew discontented to see the strong tower and its spire belonging to his brother, and taking advantage of the absence of Christian Daae, he pulled down the spire, and razed the tower to the ground. But he never prospered afterward." Here follows Waldemar's history, as also related. "Herre Ove Ramel of Basnaes, having bought up the mortgages upon Borreby Hall, which had been given by its owner to a Holstein nobleman, succeeded to the estate, Waldemar Daae retiring to Smidstrup, where he rented a house for ten marks yearly. But here he stayed only through the summer; he then removed to Viborg, and died there. And Herre Ove Ramel, who now possessed both Basnaes and Borreby, had much to do to repair the latter, which was in a very ruinous state. He often travelled over to Borreby to look after the repairs;

and so it happened that once when he had bidden his servant, Peter Rosenmeier, cover the table, and he sat and dined, there came in through the door a great black dog; and the creature came up to the table and stared at him with large, glistening eyes. Herre Ove Ramel, who was alone, felt startled, but presently the dog left the chamber, passing straight to the Record Room already mentioned. So when Peter Rosenmeier returned, his master bade him go to the Record Room and drive out the dog, and he went, but could not find the creature — and shortly after this Herre Ove Ramel died." — Thiele, *Danmarks Folkesagn*, vol. i.

THE HORN-BOOK.

THERE was a certain man who set himself to writing new doggerel for the Horn-book — two lines to every letter, as in the old one: he fancied the old rhymes were too hackneyed, and that something new was needed for the rising generation. His new Horn-book was as yet only in manuscript, and he had placed it by the side of the old printed one, in the great book-case, full of such a multitude of books, some learned, others mere books of amusement. But the old Horn-book would not peaceably endure the new Horn-book as a neighbor; he had sprung down from the shelf, giving his rival a push that stretched him on the floor, scattering the loose leaves all about. As for the old Horn-book, he lay open at his first page, the most important of all, where stand displayed all the letters, large and small. That page contains within it the essence of all the books that ever were written: it contains the alphabet, the wonderful army of signs that rule the world: a marvelous power, in sooth, have they! It all depends on the order in which they are commanded to stand; they have power to give life or take it away, to gladden or to sadden. Individually they mean nothing; but marshaled, ranked in order by a mighty chieftain, what can they not effect?

And now, there they lay, turned upward, and the Cock which was pictured at the beginning of the alphabet beamed out with feathers, red, blue, and green. Proudly he bridled up and ruffled his plumes, for he knew how great was the power of the letters, how honorable his position.

So, finding the old Horn-book had fallen open, he flapped his wings, flew forth, and perched on a corner of the book-case; there he plumed himself with his beak, and crowed long and loud. Every single book among them all — and they were all wont to stand night and day as in a trance, so

long as no one was reading them — every single book was roused by his trumpet-call; and then, when they were all wide awake, the Cock spoke out loudly and clearly about the insult that had been shown toward the worthy, venerable old Horn-book.

"Everything is to be new nowadays," he complained; "children are so wise now, they can read before they have learnt the alphabet. 'O, they want something new!' declared the man who wrote those stupid new verses that now lie sprawling on the floor. I know them well enough; more than ten times over have I heard him read them aloud, he admired them so much. Saving his presence, I prefer my own, the good old rhymes, with Xanthus for X, and with pictures belonging to them. I will fight for them; I will crow for them! Every book in the book-case knows them well. But I will just read out these absurd new rhymes. I will try and read them patiently, and then I know we shall all agree that they are good for nothing: —

"'*A.— Air.*

The Air spreads round us far and wide,
Above us, and on every side.'

"Could anything be more insipid?" commented the Cock. "But I will go on: —

"'*B. — Bear; Boat.*

The Bear roams lonely; lo, a Boat;
Men hunt him for his good warm coat.

"'*C. — Columbus.*

Columbus seeks America's shore,
And the earth grows twice as large as before.

"'*D. — Denmark.*

Denmark is a bonnie land;
God shield it with protecting hand!'

"Now, that is just what some folk will consider so fine and patriotic," quoth the Cock. "I don't; I can find nothing fine here. No matter: —

"'*E. — Elephant.*

The Elephant walks with a stately stride,
Crushing the jungle on either side.

"'*F.* — *Fair.*

Fantastic sights are in the Fair;
Let us see the monkeys and dancing bear.

"'*G.* — *Gold.*

Gold! gold! bright red gold!
Heavy to win, and light to hold.'

"I have heard something very like that before," objected the Cock: —

"'*H.* — *Hurra.*

Hurra! 'tis an easy word to say:
But where is the deed that deserves hurra?'

"I should like to know how many children will understand that!" exclaimed the Cock. "I suppose they will put on the title-page, 'Horn-book for Big People and Little;' but the big folk have something else to do besides reading Horn-book rhymes, and the little ones won't be able to understand them. There are limits to everything. Well, what now?

"'*I.* — *Iceland; Island; Ida; Isaac.*

Iceland, an Island, lies in the sea;
And Ida and Isaac shall go there with me.'

"Perfectly absurd!" declared the Cock: —

"'*K.* — *Kitten; Kitchen; Knitting.*

Whilst in the Kitchen we were sitting,
That frolicsome Kitten tangled my Knitting.'

"As bad as the last!" interjected the Cock. "I don't approve of double rhymes: —

"'*L.* — *Lion; Land.*

Slowly the Lion paces the sand,
With solemn step, in the Nubian Land.

"'*M.* — *Morning.*

Duly this Morning the sun uprose,
But not for the noisy cock's loud crows.'

"Personalities!" exclaimed the Cock; "coarse enough, too. But, thank you, good man, I am in tolerable company; I don't object to being named along with the sun. Let's try a little further: —

"'*N.* — *Negro; Night.*

Black as a Negro, black as Night;
For where is the soap that can wash him white?

"'*O.* — *Olive.*

The best of all leaves, which is it? — I know!
The dove's own Olive begins with an O.

"'*P.* — *Patience.*

Patience, Prudence, Peace, and Plenty,
Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty.

"'*Q.* — *Queen.*

A quiet Queen went in quest of a Quill,
For aught I know she is seeking it still.

"'*R.* — *River; Reeds.*

The rapid River runs along,
Reeds and Rushes list his song.

"'*S.* — *Swine.*

Proclaim it not, though all the Swine
That in the forest feed were thine.'

"Bear with me, my friends!" said the Cock. "I really must stop and crow a little. It tries one's strength, reading so long: I must get breath." And then he crowed, shrill as a brass trumpet; it must have been a real pleasure — for the Cock, at least, he always enjoyed it. Then he went on: —

"'*T.* — *Tea-kettle; Tea-urn.*

The Tea-kettle doth to the kitchen belong,
Yet the Tea-urn sings not a better song.

"'*U.* — *Upsal.*

Upsal is a stately town,
In the map you'll find the name set down.

"'*V. W.* — *Vine; Wine.*

O, graceful doth twine the bonnie green Vine,
And from its juice we make good Wine.'

"Now, it is quite impossible," quoth the Cock, "that he can have found anything new for X instead of Xanthus. Nay, what have we here?

"'*X.* — *Xantippe.*

The sea of marriage has rocks of strife,
As Socrates found with Xantippe, his wife.'

"Well, let him take Xantippe, if he likes. He is welcome. Xanthus was ever so much better: —

"'*Y.* — *Ygdrasil.*

Under Ygdrasil tree — an ash, they say —
Sat the gods in council every day;
But the tree is dead, and the gods are fled.'

"What business had he to make a third line of it? Who wanted more than two, I wonder? And understand it I don't. But here we come to the last: that's a comfort: —

"'*Z.* — *Zephyr.*

Sweet Zephyr, the gentle wind from the west,
O, that is the breeze that I love the best!'

"Well there's an end of it — in one sense, at least; I wish we could hear the end of it in the other sense. But, no! it will be printed and sold and read, instead of the noble old rhymes in my book. What says the assembly, learned and unlearned, collectively and individually? What says the alphabet? I have spoken; now let others act!"

The books stood still; the book-case stood still; but the Cock flew back to his place at great C in the old Horn-book, and looked proudly around. "I have spoken well — I have crowed well! The new Horn-book can do nothing like it. It will die of a certainty; it is dead already — it has no Cock!"

THE OLD OAK-TREE'S LAST DREAM.

A CHRISTMAS TALE.

THERE stood in the wood, high on a bank near the open sea-shore, such a splendid old Oak-tree! It was just three hundred and sixty five years old; but all this length of years had seemed to the tree scarcely more than so many days appear to us men and women. A tree's life is not quite the same as a man's; we wake during the day, and sleep and dream during the night; but a tree wakes throughout three seasons of the year, and has no sleep till winter comes. The winter is its sleeping time, — its night after the long day which we call spring, summer, and autumn.

Through many a warm summer day had the May-flies danced in light, innocent glee round his crown; and if for a moment one of the little creatures rested from its play on one of the large, fresh oak-leaves, the tree would say, "Poor little insect! only one day long is thy brief life! how sad that is!"

"Sad!" would the little May-fly then exclaim in wonder; "what meanest thou by 'sad?' Everything is so bright, so warm and beautiful, and I am so happy!"

"But only for one day, and then all is past for thee."

"Past?" repeated the May-fly. "What is 'past?' Art thou 'past,' too?"

"No; I shall live thousands, perhaps, of thy days, and my day lasts a whole year. But that is something so long, thou canst not reckon it."

"Well then, I don't understand thee at all. Thou hast thousands of days, and I have thousands of moments to be happy and joyous. Will the beauty of this world cease when thou diest?"

"No," said the tree; "it will last longer, infinitely longer."

"Well, then, we are in the same case, only I reckon differently."

And the May-fly danced hither and thither, rejoiced over her fine delicate wings, and reveled in the warm atmosphere, which was so perfumed with the delicious scents from the clover-field and the wild roses, elders, and honeysuckles of the hedge, not to speak of bluebells, cowslips, and wild thyme, that the little insect felt as it were intoxicated with sweet odors. The day was long, full of brightness, beauty, and joy, and by sunset the little May-fly felt wearied out with pleasant excitement. Her wings would bear her no longer; softly she glided down upon the cool, rocking blades of grass, nodded her little head, and slept the happy sleep of death.

"Poor little May-fly!" quoth the Oak-tree; "thine was too brief an existence!"

And every summer day recurred the same dance, the same argument, and the same peaceful falling asleep; it was repeated through whole generations of May-flies, all alike light-hearted and joyous.

The Oak-tree stood wide awake during his spring morning, his summer noon, his autumnal evening; now it was nearly night; winter was drawing nigh. Already the storms were singing, "Good-night, good-night! there falls a leaf, there falls a leaf! we plucked it, we plucked it! Sleep soundly! we will sing thee to sleep! we will rock thee to sleep! we do no harm, we do the old boughs good; they crack, and rustle, and swing, all from pure pleasure. Sleep soundly, sleep soundly! it is thy three hundredth and sixty-fifth night, but thou art as fresh as a sapling but a year old; sleep soundly! The skies are dripping with snow — will shake a warm white coverlet over thy feet; sleep soundly, and dream pleasant dreams!"

And the Oak-tree stood stripped of all his foliage, ready to go to rest for the whole winter, and in it to dream many dreams — to dream of the past, just as men dream.

The tree had once been a little one, and had had a field for his cradle. Now, according to human reckoning, he was in his fourth century; he was the tallest and mightiest tree in the wood; his crown towered high above all the other trees, and was seen far out on the sea, serving as a beacon to ships; but the old Oak-tree had never thought how many eyes sought him out from afar. High up in his green crown wood-doves

had built their nests, and the cuckoo perched to announce spring; and in the autumn, when his leaves looked like copper-plates hammered out thin, birds of passage came and rested awhile among the boughs, before they flew across the seas. But now it was winter; the tree stood leafless, and the bowed and crooked branches displayed their dark outlines; crows and jackdaws came alternately, gossiping together about the hard times that were beginning, and the difficulty of getting food during the winter.

It was just at the holy Christmas-tide that the Oak-tree dreamt his most beautiful dream; this dream we will hear.

The tree had a foreboding that a festive season was nigh; he seemed to hear the church-bells ringing all round, and to feel as though it were a mild, warm summer day; fresh and green, he reared his mighty crown on high, the sunbeams played among his leaves and boughs, the air was filled with fragrance, bright-colored butterflies gamboled, and gnats danced — which was all they could do to show their joy. And all that the tree had beheld during his life passed by as in a festive procession. Knights and ladies, with feathers in their caps, and hawks perching on their wrists, rode gayly through the wood, dogs barked, and the huntsman sounded his bugle. Then came foreign soldiers in bright armor and gay vestments, bearing spears and halberds, setting up their tents, and presently taking them down again; then watch-fires blazed up, and bands of wild outlaws sang, reveled, and slept under the tree's outstretched boughs, or happy lovers met in the quiet moonlight, and carved their initials on the grayish bark. At one time a guitar, at another an Æolian harp, had been hung up amid the old oak's boughs, by merry travelling apprentices; now they hung there again, and the wind played so sweetly with the strings. The wood-doves cooed, as though they would do their best to express the tree's happy feelings, and the cuckoo talked about himself as usual, proclaiming how many summer days he had to live.

And now it seemed a new and stronger current of life flowed through him, down to his lowest roots, up to his highest twigs, even to the very leaves! the tree felt in his roots that a warm life stirred in the earth, felt his strength increase,

and that he was growing taller and taller; his trunk shot up more and more, his crown grew fuller, he spread, he towered, and still as the tree grew he felt that his power grew with it, and that his ardent longing to advance higher and higher up to the bright warm sun increased also.

Already had he towered above the clouds, which drifted below him, now like a troop of dark-plumaged birds of passage, now like flocks of large white swans.

And every leaf could see as though it had eyes; the stars became visible by daylight, so large and bright, each one sparkling like a mild, clear eye; they reminded him of dear kind eyes that had sought each other under his shade — lovers' eyes, children's eyes.

It was a blessed moment! and yet, in the height of his joy, the Oak-tree felt a desire and longing that all the other trees, bushes, herbs, and flowers of the wood might be lifted up with him, might share in this glory and gladness. The mighty Oak-tree, amid his dream of splendor, could not be fully blessed unless he might have all, little and great, to share it with him; and this feeling thrilled through boughs and leaves as strongly, as fervently as though his were the heart of a man.

The tree's crown bowed itself, as though it missed and sought something, looked backward. Then he felt the fragrance of honeysuckles and violets, and fancied he could hear the cuckoo answering himself.

Yes, so it was! for now peeped forth, through the clouds, the green summits of the wood; the other trees below had grown and lifted themselves up likewise; bushes and herbs shot high into the air, some tearing themselves loose from their roots, and mounting all the faster. The birch had grown most rapidly; like a flash of white lightning, its slender stem shot upward, its boughs waving like pale-green banners. Even the feathery brown reed had pierced its way through the clouds; and the birds followed and sang, and sang, and on the grass that fluttered to and fro like a long streaming green ribbon perched the grasshopper, and drummed with his wings on his lean body; the cockchafers hummed, and the bees buzzed; every bird sang with all his might, and all was music and gladness.

"But the little blue flower near the water, — I want that too," said the Oak-tree; "and the bell-flower, and the dear little daisy!" The tree wanted all these.

"We are here! we are here!" chanted sweet low voices on all sides.

"But the pretty anemones of last spring, and the bed of lilies of the valley that blossomed the year before that! and the wild crab-apple tree! and all the beautiful trees and flowers that have adorned the wood through so many seasons — O, would that they had lived till now!"

"We are here! we are here!" was the answer; and this time it seemed to come from the air above, as though they had fled upward first.

"O, this is too great happiness, it is almost incredible!" exclaimed the Oak-tree; "I have them all, small and great; not one of them is forgotten! How can such blessedness be possible?"

"In the kingdom of God all things are possible," was the answer.

And the tree now felt that his roots were loosening themselves from the earth. "This is best of all," he said; "now no bonds shall detain me, I can soar up to the height of light and glory; and my dear ones are with me, small and great, — I have them all!"

. . . . . .

Such was the old Oak-tree's dream; and all the while, on that holy Christmas Eve, a mighty storm swept over sea and land; the ocean rolled its heavy billows on the shore, the tree cracked, was rent and torn up by the roots, at the very moment when he dreamt that his roots were disengaging themselves from the earth. He fell. His three hundred and sixty-five years were now as a day is to the May-fly.

On Christmas morning, when the sun burst forth, the storm was laid; all the church-bells were ringing joyously, and from every chimney, even the poorest, the blue smoke curled upward, as from the Druids' altar of old uprose the sacrificial steam. The sea was calm again, and a large vessel that had weathered the storm the night before now hoisted all its flags, in token of Yule festivity. "The tree is gone, — the old Oak-

tree, our beacon," — said the crew; "it has fallen during last night's storm. How can its place ever be supplied?"

This was the tree's funeral eulogium, brief, but well-meant. There he lay, outstretched upon the snowy carpet near the shore, whilst over it reëchoed the hymn sung on shipboard, the hymn sung in thanksgiving for the joy of Christmas, for the bliss of the human soul's salvation, through Christ, and the gift of eternal life: —

"Sing loud, and raise your voices high,
For your redemption draweth nigh;
Lift up your heads, and have no fear!
The promised kingdom, it is here!
O take the gift, in joy receive;
All things are his who will believe;
O little flock, what words can tell
The bliss of souls Christ loved so well?
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

Thus resounded the old hymn, and every soul lifted up heart and desire heavenward, even as the old tree had lifted himself on his last, best dream — his Christmas Eve dream.

THE THORNY PATH OF HONOR.

THERE is an old romance called "The Thorny Path of Honor, that was trodden by a huntsman named Bryde, whom came to great honor and dignity, but not till after manifold adversities, and much peril of life." Many a one of us has heard the tale in childhood, and perchance read it in later years, and thought of his own unrecorded "thorny path" and manifold adversities." Romance and reality are so much alike, but romance has its happy ending here on earth, whilst reality more often delays it, and refers us to time and eternity.

The world's history is a magic lantern, throwing pictures of light on the dark backgrounds of the ages; to show us how the benefactors of mankind, the martyrs of progress, have trodden "The Thorny Path of Honor."

From all times, from all lands, stand out these dazzling pictures; each picture a moment only, yet a whole life, a lifetime with its struggles and triumphs. Let us glance here and there at a few in the martyr-ranks; these ranks that will never be filled till the earth melts away.

Behold a crowded theatre: the "Clouds" of Aristophanes are sending streams of mirth and mockery for the populace; the stage of Athens makes a laughing-stock, both body and mind, of her foremost man, who stood between the people and the Thirty Tyrants, — he who in the battle fray rescued Alcibiades and Xenophon, he whose spirit soared above the old world deities, is here himself in person. He has risen among the spectators, and stands forward from the benches, that the laughing Athenians may see whether he and the stage caricature of him are like each other; there he stands erect before them, and in spirit high above them.

O green, juicy, poisonous hemlock! be thou, and not the olive-tree, the shadowy background of this Athens.

Seven cities claimed to be Homer's birthplace, that is to

say, when he was dead. See him in his life-time! he wanders through these very cities, reciting his verses for his livelihood. Thought for the morrow grizzles his hair. He, the mightiest of seers, is blind and lonely; the sharp thorn rends the mantle of the poet king.

His songs live still; and in them alone live the gods and heroes of old.

Picture upon picture billows forth from the morning land and the evening land, far removed by time and space, and yet all from the same thorny path, where the thistle never bears flower till it can only serve to deck the grave.

From under the palm-trees come camels, laden with indigo and other precious things; they are sent by the lord of the land to him whose lays are the people's delight, the country's pride. He whom spite and slander drove into exile, is found again. The caravan draws near the little town where he has taken refuge. A poor corpse is being brought out of the gate: this stops the caravan. The dead is the very man they seek, Firdusi — ended is "The Thorny Path of Honor."

Yonder sits an African, snub-nosed, blubber-lipped, and woolly haired, on the marble steps of the palace in Portugal's capital, and begs; that is the faithful slave of Camöens. If it were not for him, and the coppers that are thrown him, his master, the singer of the "Lusiad," might have starved to death. Now there stands a costly monument on the grave of Camöens.

Yet another picture. Behind iron bars may be seen a man with long and matted beard. "I have made an invention," he cries, "the greatest for centuries; and they have kept me for more than twenty years caged up here." "Who is he?" "A lunatic," says the keeper. "What craze may not befall a man? he thinks that people could get along by steam! It is Solomon de Caus, the discover of steam-power. His prescient words have not been clear enough for a Richelieu, and he dies imprisoned in a mad-house.

Here stands Columbus, whom once the street boys pursued and hooted, because he would discover a new world. He has discovered it. The bells of jubilee ring at his triumphant return; but soon the bells of envy sound louder still. The

world-discoverer, he who raised the American gold-land above ocean, and gave it to his king, is rewarded with iron chains; he desires them to be laid in his coffin, to mark how a man is valued by his own age.

Picture throngs upon picture; rich is the Thorny Path of Honor.

Here in murky gloom sits he who measured the heights of the moon-mountains; he who burst his way forth into space, among planets and stars; Galileo, the mighty one, who could see and hear the earth beneath him turning round. Blind and deaf he sits now, in his old age, suffering tortures of pain and privation, hardly able to lift his foot — that foot which once in mental agony, when the words of truth were blotted out, he stamped on the earth, crying, "Still it moves!"

Here stands a woman with a child-like heart, a creature of impulse and faith. She bears the banner before the warrior host, and brings victory and freedom to her father-land. The jubilee sounds; the bale-fire kindles; Joan of Arc, the witch, is burned at the stake. Yea, the coming age will spit upon the white lily; Voltaire, wit's own satyr, will sing of *La Pucelle*.

At the Viborg-Thing the Danish nobles are burning the king's laws. They burst into flames that light up both age and lawgiver, and send a flash of glory into yon dark donjon-tower. Yonder he sits, gray-haired, bent double, furrowing the stone table with his fingers; he once ruled over three kingdoms, the popular chief, the burghers' and peasants' friend, Christian the Second; he of the hard will in the hard age. Enemies wrote his history. Seven-and-twenty years of prison, let us remember, whenever we are reminded of his blood-guiltiness.

There sails a ship from Denmark; there stands a man by the tall mast; he looks upon Hoen for the last time; Tycho Brahe, who raised Denmark's name to the stars, and was repaid with scath and scorn, is setting forth on his way to a foreign land. "Heaven is everywhere, what want I more?" such are his words; and away he sails, our most famous man, sure in foreign lands of being honored and free.

"Free! ah, if only free from the intolerable pains of this

body!" sighs a voice of the by-gone age to us. What a picture! Griffenfeldt, the Danish Prometheus, fettered to Mumkholm's rocky isle.

We are in America, by one of the large rivers; crowds of people have gathered, a ship is to sail against wind and tide, to be a power against the elements. Robert Fulton is the name of him who thinks he can do this. The ship begins its course, suddenly it stops; the crowd laughs, whistles, and whoops, his own father whoops with them. "Presumption! madness! he has got his deserts; lock him up, the wiseacre!" Then clicks a small nail, which for a moment had stopped the machinery; the wheels work the paddles round, break the opposition of the waves — the ship sails.

Steam's weaver-shuttle turns hours into minutes between the lands of the world.

Mankind, canst thou realize the bliss of such a moment of assurance, when the soul perceives its mission? That moment, when the sorest wounds from the Thorny Path of Honor — though one's own fault may have caused them — are healed, are forgotten in spiritual health, and strength, and freedom. When all discords melt into harmony; and men acknowledge a revelation of God's grace, vouchsafed to one alone, and by him made known to all.

Then the Thorny Path of Honor shines like a glory round the earth. Happy he who is chosen to be a pilgrim thereon, and without any merit of his own, to be made one of the master builders of the bridge between God and man.

The Genius of History wings his mighty way throughout the ages, and gives us comfort and good cheer, and thoughtful calm of mind, by showing, in sunbright pictures upon murky backgrounds, the Thorny Path of Honor: not a path that end, like a fairy tale, in gladness and glitter here on earth, but one that points onward, and upward, far away into time and eternity.

OLE THE WATCHMAN.

"UP and down! down and up! Such is the way of the world," quoth Ole the watchman. "Now I can hardly get any higher; but up and down, down and up! such is the lot of most of us: it is a fine thing when one becomes a watchman in a tower, like me, able to look down upon life from an eminence."

Thus spake my merry friend Ole, in his tower — a chatty old fellow who seems to say everything that comes into his head, and yet keeps so much earnest in the depths of his heart. He comes of a good stock — some say he was the son of a conference councilor — it may be so; he has had education, has been a schoolmaster's assistant, the church clerk's deputy, and what not besides. When he lodged with the clerk, it had been agreed that he was to have free use of everything in the house; now he was young and a bit of a dandy in those days, and he must needs have his boots cleaned with the very best blacking. But this the head clerk would not allow, and so the two disagreed: the one talked of avarice, the other of vanity; this blacking became the black cause of strife, and so they parted. But what he required of the clerk he required of the world elsewhere, *i. e.*, the very best blacking, and as he could not get it, at last he took to being a hermit. The only hermitage to be found in a large town is the church-tower, so thither he mounted, and there he smoked his pipe, and paced up and down on his lonely walk, glancing upward and downward, and talking after his fashion about what he saw or saw not, what he read in books or in himself. I often lent him books, and his taste in these was a fair test of his character. "Only tell me what books thou readest, and I will tell thee what life thou leadest," is no bad proverb. My old friend had no fancy for English romances, far less for French ones; no, books about the wonders of

Nature were what he liked. I went to see him generally once a year, especially soon after the new year; he had always some funny fancies then.

I shall report two visits, giving his own words as far as I can.

FIRST VISIT.

Among the books I had lately lent Ole was one about pebbles, and this had pleased him mightily.

"Of a verity, they are real jewels of antiquity, these pebbles," he said; "and folk pass them by thoughtlessly, treading them down on field or shore, as I have done myself, never considering what claims they may have to our respect. Thank you for the book, it has put old thoughts and fancies out of my head, and made me mad to read more of the same sort. The earth's romance is truly the most wonderful of all romances. It is a pity one cannot read the first parts; they are recorded in a language we have not learned: we have to hammer away among strata and stones, puzzling out a bit here and there out of the several acts of the earth's drama, and not before the sixth act do the human actors of the drama, old Father Adam and Lady Eve, make their appearance; that is far too late for some impatient readers, who want them to come on the stage forthwith, but it is soon enough for me. Truly it is a romance and a most marvelous one, and here are we in the very thick of it. We creep and crawl about, but the globe turns round and round all the while, and yet never splashes the spray of its oceans over us; the crust we move on keeps whole, and we never fall through, and so the story goes on with steady progress through millions of years. Many thanks for thy book on pebbles; the old fellows could tell us so much, had they but power to speak. Is it not funny to think that we are all, whether we have the best blacking or not, only like tiny ants on the world's ant-hill, even though some of us are ants with stars and ribbons, places and offices? And one feels so ridiculously young, compared with these venerable stones with their millions of years. I read the book on New Year's Eve, and was soon so lost in it that I quite forgot my usual New Year's Eve entertainment — watching the wild hunt to Amager: you know what I mean.

"The witches' flight to Blocksberg on Midsummer Eve is famous enough, but our wild host speeds to Amager on New Year's Eve. For all the bad poets, poetesses, newspaper scribblers, musicians, and artistic celebrities who are fit for nothing else, ride on New Year's Eve through the air to Amager; they sit astride their pencils or goose-quills — steel-pens are too stiff for the purpose. I see them every New Year's Eve; most of them I could name, but it is not worth while, — they have no fancy that folk should know of their voyage through the air on goose-quills. I have a sort of cousin who is a fishwoman, and provides abuse and scandal for three respectable journals; she declares she has been invited to join the party; she was carried, for she cannot herself wield a pen, and therefore could not ride on one. Half of what she told me is a lie, no doubt, but half is enough. When she was fairly started they all set up a chorus, each of the guests had composed his own melody, and each sang his own, which of course he deemed the best; they were all much alike; it was regular cats' chorus. They were marshaled in companies; those who write without giving their names had to be introduced one after another; the executioners, too, and the folk who write puffs, affirming indifferent articles to be 'good, very good, supereminently good,' were received with wonderful cordiality. And in the midst of all these diversions, such as they were, would shoot forth from holes here and there, now a barren stalk, now a leafless tree, a monstrous flower, or great mushroom, and last of all a roof bearing on it all things whatsoever this honorable assembly had given to the world during the last year; bright sparks were seen glistening among them, and these were the borrowed thoughts and ideas that had been made use of, and which now released themselves and flew up like sky-rockets. They played at games, 'What are my thoughts like?' and 'Cross questions and crooked answers,' and small witticisms went round, and laughter, like 'the crackling of thorns under a pot,' followed. It was most amusing, my cousin declared, and she bore her full share in the entertainment, and said so many malicious things. So you see, since I know so much about this midnight festival, it is only natural that I should be interested in

watching for it; but yesterday I forgot all about it, I was rolling about with my stones, rolling through millions of years, watching them as they loosened themselves up in the north, drifted along with the icebergs ages before Noah's ark was timbered, sink to the bottom and then mounted up again on a sand-reef, and lastly peering up through the waves, declaring of themselves 'We will be Zealand!' I saw them become the homes of different species of birds whereof we know nought, the homes of wild chieftains we know not either, until the axe hewed out in Runic letters the names of a few that can thus be referred in our chronology.

"Well I was still busied with these stones when there fell two, three, four beautiful shooting-stars, and these gave my thoughts quite another turn. Now do they know what sort of thing is a shooting-star? do they know it or not, these sages? Because I have an idea of my own about them. This is what I start from. How often is not a single audible word of thanks or blessing returned for the good action or beautiful work that rejoices the hearts of all who witness it! Yes, often is gratitude unuttered, but it falls not to the ground, nevertheless; I can fancy it is caught up by the sunshine, and sooner or later the sunbeams bear the silent thanksgiving hence and showers it over the head of the benefactor. Sometimes the thanks of a whole nation are thus due; they come late, but come at last like a bouquet, falling in the guise of a shooting-star over the grave of hero or statesman. And thus it is a wonderful pleasure to me when I see a shooting star, especially on New Year's Eve, and to guess for whom the bouquet of thanks can be intended. Lately there fell a radiant shooting-star in the southwest — whom could that be for? — it fell, I think, exactly over the bank by Flensborg Fiord, where the Danish banner with its white cross waves over the graves of Schleppegrell, Lassoe, and their comrades. And another fell in the heart of Zealand, — it fell upon Sorö; I know that was a bouquet for Holberg's grave, a thanksgiving from the multitude who during the past year have laughed over his delightful comedies.

"It would be a joy indeed, a triumph, to know that such a meteor would fall upon our own graves! One thing is cer-

tain, none will ever fall on mine, not a single sunbeam will bring me thanks, for I have done nothing I can be thanked for. I do not deserve, it seems, even blacking for my boots!" concluded Ole.

SECOND VISIT.

Again, on another New Year's Day, I went to the tower, and this time Ole talked about the toasts that had been drunk the evening before. Then came his history of the glasses, much in these words.

"When on New Year's Eve the clock strikes twelve, people rise from table with their glasses fresh filled, and drink a welcome to the New Year. Folk begin the New Year with a glass in their hands, that is first-rate for those who love wine; folk begin the year with going to bed, that is famous for sluggards! But sleep is sure to play a chief leading part in the doings of the year, and wine too. Do you know the inhabitants of the glasses?" he asked. "Why, health, joy, and whims, vexation, and bitter misery all dwell therein!

"Look you now, the first glass is the glass of health, that precious herb grows therein; plant it in the bare boards of thy chamber, and by the year's end thou mayst sit in a leafy arbor.

"Now take the second glass! Ah yes, thence flies out a little bird, chirruping with such innocent gladness of heart, that men listen and perhaps sing with it, sing 'Life is fair, we will not droop our heads; courage, and joy, and freedom!'

"From the third glass darts forth a tiny winged sprite, a cherub can he not be called, for he has Nisse's blood and a Nisse's soul, all for jest and drollery. He lurks behind our ear and whispers some queer fancy, he creeps into our heart's core and warms it so that a man grows extravagantly merry — becomes the wittiest in a party of wits.

"In the fourth glass dwell neither herb, bird, or fairy: it is the boundary line of sense, and beyond that boundary shouldst thou never pass.

"Takest thou the fifth glass? Then wilt thou weep in bitter anguish, or else laugh a fierce laughter. For from this glass springs forth with a shout Prince Carnival, wanton and wild as an elf; he presses upon thee, thou forgettest thy dig-

nity, if thou hast any, forgettest what thou oughtest not to forget. All is dance, and song, and clamor, the masks spring upon thee ; tear thyself loose if thou canst !

" The sixth glass ! Ah, here comes a man with a lantern to guide thee home — to what sort of home ? and inhabited by what sort of spirits ? There is an old legend about a saint who was bidden choose one of the seven deadly sins, and he chose, as he thought, the least — drunkenness — and in it he committed all the six others. The vile liquid in the sixth glass nourishes all evil seeds within us ; each one of them sprouting forth with a force like that of the grain of mustard, which spreads into a mighty tree. And so here you have my history of the six glasses," concluded he.

This was what I heard on my second visit to Ole. I may pay him another next New Year's Day.

THE DAYS OF THE WEEK.

"WE will also have a good time for once," said the Days of the Week; "we will come together and have a feast." But every one of the seven Days was so much occupied all the year round, that they had not a free moment left for enjoyment. They wanted to have a whole day to themselves, and such a day they get every four years in the intercalary day; this day is placed at the end of February, for the purpose of bringing order in the account of time.

And on this intercalary day they decided to meet together, and hold their feast. February being the month of carnivals, they agreed to come together in a carnival fashion, every one dressed according to his profession and destination; have the best things to eat, and drink the best wines, make speeches, and tell each other the most agreeable and most disagreeable things in unrestrained fellowship. The Norse heroes had a custom, in the good old times, of shying the bones, which they had cleared of all the meat, at each other's head; but the week-days thought of throwing bombshells at each other with their mouths, in the form of scorching witticisms, such as might be in keeping with innocent carnival amusements.

And the twenty ninth of February came in due time; with it they assembled.

Sunday, foreman of the week-days, came first, dressed in a black silk cloak. The pious people mistook the cloak for a minister's gown. The worldly minded, however, saw that he was dressed in domino for a frolic, and that the full-blown carnation, which he wore in his button-hole, was nothing but a little red theatre-lantern, which said, "No more tickets: standing room only; hope you will enjoy yourself."

Monday, a young mechanic, a distant relative of Sunday, and much given to pleasures, came next. No sooner did he hear the military music of the parade, than he rushed out,

saying, "I must go and hear Offenbach's music; it does not go to my head, neither to the heart: but it itches in the muscles of my legs. I must dance, and have a swing with the girls, get me a blue eye, and then sleep upon it; the next day I go to work with new vigor: did you see the new moon of the week?"

Tuesday is Tyr's day, the day of strength. "Yes, that am I," said Tuesday. "I take hold of the work, fasten Mercury's wings to the merchant's boots, look after the factory, and see that the wheels are oiled, and turn easily. I also see to it that the tailor sits upon his table, and the street-paver is by his paving-stones. I hold everybody to his business, and have an eye upon them all, and therefore I appear among you in a policeman's uniform, and my name is 'Politics day.' If this is a bad joke, then you may think of a better one, every one of you."

"And now come I," said Wednesday. "I stand in the middle of the week; the Germans call me Mr. Midweek. I stand like a young clerk in a store, like a flower among the other honored days of the week. If we march up in file, then have I three days in front of me, and three days behind; they are my body-guard: and I may with propriety say that I am the most prominent of all the days of the week."

And now Thursday came in, dressed up like a coppersmith, with a hammer and a copper kettle — token of his aristocratic descent. "I am of very high birth," said he. "In the northern countries I am named after Thor, the god of thunder; and in the south, after Jupiter, the god of lightning; these two understood how to thunder and lighten, and that has remained in the family."

And then he beat his copper kettle, and thus proved his high descent.

Friday was dressed up like a young girl, who called herself Freia, the goddess of beauty of the North; for variety's sake she called herself Venus; that depended altogether on the language of the country in which she appeared. She was of a quiet, cheerful character, she said; but this was the odd day of the leap year, which gives liberty to woman, that she may, according to an old custom, propose to the man she likes, without waiting for him to propose to her.

Last came Saturday, waddling along like an old housekeeper, with broom, dust-pan, and other cleansing articles. Her favorite dish was beer-soup, but she was not particularly anxious to have it put on the table on that festive occasion.

And thus the week-days held a banquet, as I have described them; here they are, ready for family use as tableaux. Of course you may improve upon them; we give them only as vignettes for February, the only month that receives a day in addition.

DANISH POPULAR LEGENDS.

DENMARK is rich in old legends of historical persons, churches, and manors, of hills, of fields, and bottomless moors; sayings from the days of the great plague, from the times of war and peace. The sayings live in books, and on the tongues of the people; they fly far about like a flock of birds, but still are as different from one another as the thrush is from the owl, as the wood-pigeon from the gull. Listen to me, and I will tell you some of them.

It happened one evening in days of yore, when the enemy were pillaging the Danish country, that a battle had been fought and won by the Danes, and many killed and wounded lay on the field of battle. One of these, an enemy, had lost both his legs by a shot. A Danish soldier, standing near by, had just taken out a bottle filled with beer, and was about to put it to his mouth, when the badly wounded man asked him for a drink. As he stooped to hand him the bottle, the enemy discharged his pistol at him, but missed his shot. The soldier drew his bottle back again, drank half of it, and gave the remaining half to his enemy, only saying, "You rascal, now you will only get half of it."

The king afterward hearing of this, granted the soldier and his descendants an armorial bearing of nobility, on which was painted a half-filled bottle, in memory of his deed.

There is a beautiful tradition worth telling about the church-bell of Farum. The parsonage stood close by the church. It was a dark night late in the fall, and the minister was sitting up at a late hour preparing his sabbath sermon, when he heard a slight, strange sound from the large church-bell. No wind was blowing, and the sound was inexplicable to him; he got up, took the keys, and went into the church.

As he entered the church the sound stopped suddenly, but he heard a faint sigh from above. "Who is there, disturbing the peace of the church?" he asked, in a loud voice. Footsteps were heard from the tower, and he saw in the passage-way a little boy advancing toward him.

"Be not angry!" said the child. "I slipped in here when the Vesper Service was rung; my mother is very sick!" and now the little boy could not say more for the tears that choked him. The minister patted him on the cheek, and encouraged him to be frank, and to tell him all about it.

"They say that my mother — my sweet, good mother — is going to die; but I knew that when one is sick unto death he may recover again and live, if in the middle of the night one dares enter the church, and scrape off a little rust from the large church-bell; that is a safeguard against death. Therefore I came here and hid myself until I heard the clock strike twelve. I was so afraid! I thought of all the dead ones, and of their coming into the church. I dared not look out; I said the Lord's Prayer, and scraped the rust off the bell."

"Come, my good child," said the minister; "our Lord will forsake neither thy mother nor thee." So they went together to the poor cottage, where the sick woman was lying. She slept quietly and soundly. Our Lord granted her life, and his blessings shone over her and her son.

There is a legend about a poor young fellow, Paul Vendelbo, who became a great and honored man. He was born in Jutland, and had striven and studied so well that he got through the examination as student, but felt a still greater desire to become a soldier and stroll about in foreign countries. One day he walked with two young comrades, who were well off, along the ramparts of Copenhagen, and talked to them of his desire. He stopped suddenly, and looked up at the window of the Professor's house, where a young girl was seated, whose beauty had astonished him and the two others. Perceiving how he blushed, they said in joke, "Go in to her, Paul; and if you can get a voluntary kiss from her at the window, so that we can see it, we will give you money for travelling, that you may go abroad and see if fortune is more favorable for you there than at home."

Paul Vendelbo entered into the house, and knocked at the parlor door.

"My father is not at home," said the young girl.

"Do not be angry with me!" he answered, and the blood rushed up into his cheeks, "it is not your father I want!" And now he told her frankly and heartily his wish to try the world and acquire an honorable name; he told her of his two friends who were standing in the street, and had promised him money for travelling on the condition that she should voluntarily give him a kiss at the open window; and he looked at her with such an open, honest, and frank face, that her anger disappeared.

"It is not right for you to speak such words to a chaste maid," said she; "but you look so honest, I will not hinder your fortune!" And she led him to the window, and gave him a kiss. His friends kept their promise, and furnished him with money. He went into the service of the Czar, fought in the battle of Pultawa, and acquired name and honor. Afterward, when Denmark needed him, he returned home, and became a mighty man of the army and of the king's council. One day he entered the Professor's plain room, and it was not just the Professor he wished to see this time either: it was again his daughter, Ingeborg Vinding, who gave him the kiss, — the inauguration of his fortune. A fortnight after, Paul Vendelbo Loevendern (Lion-eagle) celebrated his wedding.

The enemy made once a great attack on the Danish island of Funen. One village only was spared; but this was also soon to be sacked and burnt. Two poor people lived in a low-studded house, in the outskirts of the town. It was a dark winter evening; the enemy was expected; and in their anxiety they took the Book of Psalms, and opened it to see if the psalm which they first met with could render them any aid or comfort. They opened the book, and turned to the psalm, "A mighty fortress is our God." Full of confidence, they sang it; and, strengthened in faith, they went to bed and slept well, — kept by the Lord's guardianship. When they awoke in the morning it was quite dark in the room, and the

daylight could not penetrate; they went to the door, but could not open it. Then they mounted the loft, got the trap-door open, and saw that it was broad daylight; but a heavy drift of snow had in the night fallen upon the whole house and hidden it from the enemies, who in the night-time had pillaged and burnt the town. Then they clasped their hands in thankfulness, and repeated the psalm, "A mighty fortress is our God!" The Lord had guarded them, and raised an intrenchment of snow around them.

From North Seeland there comes a gloomy incident that stirs the thoughts. The church of Roervig is situated far out toward the sand hills by the stormy Kattegat. One evening a large ship dropped anchor out there, and was presumed to be a Russian man-of-war. In the night a knocking was heard at the gate of the parsonage, and several armed and masked persons ordered the minister to put on his ecclesiastical gown and accompany them out to the church. They promised him good pay, but used menaces if he declined to go. He went with them. The church was lighted, unknown people were gathered, and all was in deep silence. Before the altar the bride and bridegroom were waiting, dressed in magnificent clothes, as if they were of high rank, but the bride was pale as a corpse. When the marriage ceremony was finished, a shot was heard, and the bride lay dead before the altar. They took the corpse, and all went away with it. The next morning the ship had weighed anchor. To this day nobody has been able to give any explanation of the event.

The minister who took part in it wrote down the whole event in his Bible, which is handed down in his family. The old church is still standing between the sand hills at the tossing Kattegat, and the story lives in writing and in memory.

I must tell you one more church legend. There lived in Denmark, on the island of Falster, a rich lady of rank, who had no children, and her family was about to die out. So she took a part of her riches and built a magnificent church. When it was finished, and the altar-candles lighted, she stepped up to the altar-table and prayed on her knees to our

Lord, that He would grant her, for her pious gift, a life upon the earth as long as her church was standing. Years went by. Her relations died, her old friends and acquaintances, and all the former servants of the manor were laid in their graves; but she, who made such an evil wish, did not die. Generation upon generation became strange to her, she did not approach anybody, and nobody approached her. She wasted away in a long dotage, and sat abandoned and alone; her senses were blunted, she was like a sleeping, but not like a dead person. Every Christmas Eve the life in her flashed up for a moment, and she got her voice again. Then she would order her people to put her in an oak coffin, and place it in the open burying-place of the church. The minister was then to wait on her in order to receive her commands. They laid her in the coffin, and brought it to the church. The minister came, as desired, and raised the cover for the old, wearied lady, who was lying there without rest.

"Is my church still standing?" she would ask with shivering voice; and upon the minister's answer, "It stands still!" she would sigh profoundly and sorrowfully, and fall back again. The minister let the cover down, and came again the next Christmas night, and the next again, and still again the following. Now there is no stone of the church left upon another, no traces of the buried dead ones. A large whitethorn grows here on the field, with beautiful flowers every spring, as if it were the sign of the resurrection of life. It is said that it grows on the very spot where the coffin with the noble lady stood, where her dust became dust of earth.

There is an old popular saying that our Lord, when he expelled the fallen angels, let some of them drop down upon the hills, where they live still, and are called "Bjergfolk" (mountain goblins), or "Trolde" (imps). They are always afraid, and flee away when it thunders, which is for them a voice from heaven. Others fell down in the alder moors; they are called "Elver-folk" (alder folks), and among them the women are very handsome to look at, but not to trust; their backs are also hollow, like a dough-trough. Others fell down in old farms and houses; they became dwarfs and

"Nisser" (elves). Sometimes they are wont to have intercourse with men, and a great many very strange stories are related about them.

Up in Jutland lived in a large hill such a mountain goblin, together with a great many other imps. One of his daughters was married to the smith of the village. The smith was a bad man, and beat his wife. At last she got tired of it, and one day as he was again about to beat her, she took a horse-shoe and broke it over him. She possessed such immense strength, that she easily could have broken him in pieces too. He thought about it, and did not beat her any more. Yet it was rumored abroad, and her respect among the country-people was lost, and she was known as a "Trold baru" (an imp child). No one in the parish would have any intercourse with her. The mountain goblin got a hint of this; and one Sunday, when the smith and his wife, together with other parishioners, were standing in the church-yard, waiting for the minister, she looked out over the bay, where a fog was rising.

"Now comes father," she said, "and he is angry!" He came, and angry he was.

"Will you throw them to me, or will you rather do the catching?" he asked, and looked with greedy eyes upon the church-people.

"The catching!" she said; for she knew well that he would not be so gentle when they fell into his hands. And so the mountain goblin seized one after another, and flung them over the roof of the church, while the daughter, standing on the other side, caught them gently. From that time she got along very well with the parishioners; they were all afraid of the mountain goblin, and many of that kind were scattered about the country. The best they could do was to avoid quarreling with him, and rather turn his acquaintance to their profit. They knew well that the imps had big kettles filled with gold money, and it was certainly worth while to get a handful of it; but for that they had to be cunning and ingenious, like the peasant of whom I am going to tell you; as also of his boy, who was still more cunning.

The peasant had a hill on his field, which he would not

leave uncultivated; he ploughed it, but the mountain goblin, who lived in the hill, came out and asked, —

"How dare you plough upon my roof?"

"I did not know that it was yours!" said the peasant; "but is not advantageous for any of us to let such a piece of land lie uncultivated. Let me plough and sow! and then you reap the first year what is growing over the earth, and I what grows in the earth. Next year we will change." They agreed; and the peasant sowed the first year carrots, and the second corn. The mountain goblin got the top part of the carrots, and the roots of the corn. In this way they lived in harmony together.

But now it happened that there was to be a christening in the house of the peasant. The peasant was much embarrassed, as he could not well omit inviting the mountain goblin, with whom he lived in good accord; but if the imp accepted his invitation, the peasant would fall into bad repute with the minister and the other folk of the parish. Cunning as the peasant ordinarily was, this time he could not find out how to act. He spoke about it to his pig-boy, who was the more cunning of the two.

"I will help you!" said the boy; and taking a large bag, he went out to the hill of the mountain goblin; he knocked, and was let in. Then he said that he came to invite him to the christening. The mountain goblin accepted the invitation, and promised to come.

"I must give a christening-present, I suppose; mustn't I?"

"They usually do," said the boy, and opened the bag. The imp poured money into it.

"Is that sufficient?" The boy lifted the bag.

"Most people give as much!" Then all the money in the large money kettle was poured into the bag.

"Nobody gives more — most less."

"Let me know, now," said the mountain goblin, "the great guests you are expecting."

"Three priests and one bishop," said the boy.

"That is fine; but such gentlemen look only for eating and drinking, — they don't care about me. Who else comes?" — "Mother Mary is expected!" — "Hm, hm! but I think

there will always be a little place for me behind the stove! Well, and then?"

"Well, then comes 'our Lord.'" — "Hm, hm, hm! that was mighty! but such highly distinguished guests usually come late and go away early. I shall therefore, while they are in, slink away a little. What sort of music shall you have?"

"Drum-music!" said the boy; "our Father has ordered a heavy thundering, after which we shall dance! drum-music it shall be."

"O, is it not dreadful!" cried the mountain goblin. "Thank your master for the invitation, but I would rather stay at home. Did he not know, then, that thundering and drum are to me, and to my whole race, a horror? Once, in my younger days, going out to take a walk, the thunder began to drum, and I got one of the drumsticks over my thigh-bone so that it cracked. I will not have more of that kind of music! Give my thanks and my greetings."

And the boy took the bag on his back, and brought his master the great riches, and the imp's friendly greetings.

DANISH POPULAR LEGENDS. See page 353.

THE CHILD IN THE GRAVE.

THERE was sorrow in the house, sorrow in every heart, for the youngest child, a boy of four years old, the joy and pride of his parents, was dead. His two sisters remained, sweet good girls were they, but the lost child is always the most precious, and this was the youngest, and the only boy besides. It was indeed a heavy trial. The little girls grieved as young hearts grieve, awed by the affliction of their parents; the father's head was bowed in anguish; but the mother — she suffered most of all. Night and day had she hovered about the sick child, had nursed it, carried it about, watched it; it was a part of herself; she could not conceive that it would really die, must be laid in a coffin, and shut up in the dark grave. God could not take her child from her, she thought; and when the sad certainty burst upon her mind, when her darling ceased to breathe and lay cold and stiff before her, she exclaimed, in bitterness and agony, "God has not known it. The Almighty has heartless ministers here upon earth; they do as they list, and will not heed a mother's prayers."

Bitter were her words, for her heart was full of despair. There were hours when she could not even weep; she thought not of her young daughters; her husband's tears fell upon her forehead, but she never looked up to him; her thoughts were all with her dead child, her mind busied itself only in recalling sweet memories of him, his winning ways, his innocent childish prattle.

The day of the funeral arrived. For several nights she had not closed her eyes; in the early morning of this day, overcome by weariness, she fell asleep, and during her sleep the coffin was carried into a chamber apart, and there, whence the sound of the hammer could not reach her, the lid was nailed down.

She awoke, and demanded to see her child, but her husband

replied with tears, "We have closed the coffin; there was no choice; it must be done."

"If God deals hardly with me," she exclaimed, in bitterness, "how should men be otherwise than hard too!" and she burst into a fit of vehement sobbing.

The coffin was carried to the grave; the comfortless mother meanwhile sat with her young daughters; she looked at them without seeing them, her heart had no more rest in her home, she gave herself up to sorrow, and it tossed her to and fro as the sea tosses the ship that has lost its pilot. Thus passed the day of the funeral; several days followed, all spent in the same heavy monotony of sorrow. With streaming eyes and sad glances her household gazed upon her; they would fain have spoken words of love and comfort, but what could that avail? she would not have heeded them.

It seemed as though she would never know sleep again, and yet sleep would be her best friend, would strengthen her body, and bring back rest to her soul; they prevailed upon her to lie down in bed, and there she would lie as quietly as though she were actually sleeping. One night her husband listened to her breathing, and really believed she had at last found repose: he folded his hands and thanked God; he was still praying when he fell into a sound sleep. And presently his wife, seeing he was asleep, arose, dressed herself, and stealthily crept out of the house. She would fain seek the spot whither her thoughts flew night and day; she would go to the grave where her child lay imprisoned.

She stole through the garden and passed into the field beyond, where a foot-path led to the church-yard. No one saw her; she saw no one.

It was a beautiful starry night, the air was mild; it was still early in September. She entered the church-yard, she reached the little grave; it was like one large bouquet of fragrant flowers. She sat down and bowed her head over the grave, as though through the thick covering of earth she could discern the dear little boy whose smile she remembered so well, — that loving look in his sweet eyes as he lay on his sick-bed; and she bent over him and lifted the tiny hand he himself had not strength to raise, — how could she ever forget it? And now she sat

beside his grave as then beside his bed, and her tears had free course, they flowed fast and watered the flowers on his grave.

Some time passed away. Was it a dream? for a voice close in her ear addressed her. "What wilt thou? go down into the grave to thy child?" it demanded. That voice so deep, yet so clear, it thrilled her very soul. She looked up, and saw standing beside her a man wrapped in a heavy black cloak, and with a hood over his head, but she could see his face under the hood, and though stern, that face inspired confidence, and his eyes, though grave, sparkled with the fire of youth.

"Down to my child!" she repeated the words in a sad pleading tone; it was like the prayer of despair.

"Darest thou follow me?" inquired the form. "For I am Death."

She bowed her head in token of assent. All at once the thousands of stars above shone each with a splendor like that of the full moon, then for a moment the bright varied colors of the flowers on the grave glittered before her, then they too vanished, the surface of the earth yielded beneath her feet like soft hovering drapery, and she sank. Death had spread his black mantle over her, and all was darkness; she sank deeper than the grave-digger's spade can reach; the church-yard lay like a ceiling above her head.

The long lappets of Death's black mantle fell aside, and she stood in a wide hall, a pleasant soothing twilight surrounding her. But close to her she beheld her child, and in another second held him tight to her heart. He smiled on her more sweetly, more joyously than ever during his life-time; she uttered a cry, but it was not audible, for the hall was filled with the sound of music, now swelling high and loud, now dying away into clear faint tones. Such blessed sounds had never before greeted her ears; they seemed to proceed from the other side of the thick black curtain that sundered the hall from the vast regions of eternity.

"My sweet mother! my own mother!" said the child. It was the old familiar voice; kiss followed kiss, — what happiness was this for the poor mother! But the child pointed to the black curtain. "Look, look!" he cried; "there is nothing like this on earth! see what a blessed land! look, dear mother."

But the mother could see nothing but black night; she saw with earthly eyes, not as the child whom God had called to himself could see. Likewise with the music, she could hear the sweet tones, but could not understand the words.

"Now I can fly, mother," said the child, "fly together with all the other happy children, straight into the Paradise of God. O, I love that so much; but when you weep as you are weeping now, it calls me back, and I cannot fly. But may I not? Thou wilt be sure to come here to me in a little time, sweetest mother!"

"O stay, stay," she entreated; "only one minute longer! once more let me look at thee, kiss thee, hold thee fast in my arms."

And she kissed him again and again, holding him fast the while. All at once her name was called overhead in such a sad, imploring tone! what could it mean?

"O don't you hear?" said the child; "it is father calling thee."

And again, after a few seconds, she heard deep sighs, sighs as from the hearts of weeping children.

"My sisters!" exclaimed the child. "O, mother, surely you have not forgotten them?"

And now she remembered those dear ones she had left in her home; great fear came upon her; she looked round and examined the different forms that were continually hovering past, gliding through the halls of death toward the black curtain, behind which they disappeared. She fancied she recognized some of these; could her husband, her little girls be among them? No, their cries, their sighing came from a far distance above her; only she had been forgetting the living for the dead.

"Mother, the bells of Paradise are ringing," said the child. "Mother, the sun is rising!"

And an overpowering light streamed forth upon her — and lo! the child was gone, and she was lifted up. All was cold around her; she lifted her head, and found herself lying in the church-yard among the flowers of her child's grave. But in her dream the Lord had become a pillar for her foot and a light to her understanding, and she bowed her knees and prayed,

"O Lord my God, forgive me that I would have kept an immortal spirit from its bliss, and could forget my duties toward the living, loving hearts Thou hast given me here."

And with this prayer her heart found rest and peace.

The sun burst forth, a little bird sang over her head, and the church-bells began to ring for the morning service. Light surrounded her, light was again in her heart; she felt the goodness of her God, she felt her own sinfulness, and, yearning, she hurried homeward. She bent over her husband; her warm, loving kiss awaked him; they spoke together of their loss, and she was now calm and strong of heart, as a wife and mother should be, and her lips spoke words of trust and comfort. "God's will is always best," she said.

And her husband asked her, "Whence hast thou all at once this strength — this mood of comfort?"

And she kissed him, and kissed her children: "Our Lord gave it me in the grave with my child."

"WHAT THE GOOD-MAN DOES IS SURE TO BE RIGHT!"

I AM going to tell you a story that was told to me when I was a little one, and which I like better and better the oftener I think of it. For it is with stories as with some men and women, the older they grow, the pleasanter they grow, and that is delightful!

Of course you have been into the country? Well, then, you must have seen a regularly poor old cottage. Moss and weeds spring up amid the thatch of the roof, a stork's nest decorates the chimney (the stork can never be dispensed with), the walls are aslant, the windows low (in fact, only one of them can be shut), the baking-oven projects forward, and an elder-bush leans over the gate, where you will see a tiny pond with a duck and ducklings in it, close under a knotted old willow-tree. Yes, and then there is a watch-dog that barks at every passer-by.

Just such a poor little cottage as this was the one in my story, and in it dwelt a husband and wife. Few as their possessions were, one of them they could do without, and that was a horse, that used to graze in the ditch beside the high-road. The good-man rode on it to town, he lent it to his neighbors, and received slight services from them in return, but still it would be more profitable to sell the horse, or else exchange it for something they could make of more frequent use. But which should they do? sell, or exchange?

"Why, you will find out what is best, good-man," said the wife. "Isn't this market-day? Come, ride off to the town — get money, or what you can for the horse — whatever you do is sure to be right. Make haste for the market!"

So she tied on his neckerchief — for that was a matter she understood better than he — she tied it with a double knot, and made him look quite spruce; she dusted his hat with the

palm of her hand; and she kissed him and sent him off, riding the horse that was to be either sold or bartered. Of course, he would know what to do.

The sun was hot, and not a cloud in the sky. The road was dusty, and such a crowd of folk passed on their way to market. Some in wagons, some on horseback, some on their own legs. A fierce sun and no shade all the way.

A man came driving a cow — as pretty a cow as could be. "That creature must give beautiful milk," thought the peasant; "it would not be a bad bargain if I got that. I say, you fellow with the cow!" he began aloud; "let's have some talk together. Look you, a horse, I believe, costs more than a cow, but it is all the same to me, as I have more use for a cow — shall we make an exchange?"

"To be sure!" was the answer, and the bargain was made.

The good-man might just as well now turn back homeward — he had finished his business. But he had made up his mind to go to market, so to market he must go, if only to look on, so, with his cow, he continued on his way. He trudged fast, so did the cow, and soon they overtook a man who was leading a sheep — a sheep in good condition, well clothed with wool.

"I should very much like to have that!" thought the peasant. "It would find pasture enough by our road-side, and in winter we might take it into our own room. And really it would be more reasonable for us to be keeping a sheep than a cow. Shall we exchange?"

Yes, the man who owned the sheep was quite willing; so the exchange was made, and the good-man now went on with his sheep. Presently there passed him a man with a big goose under his arm.

"Well, you have got a heavy fellow there!" quoth the peasant. "Feathers and fat in plenty! How nicely we could tie her up near our little pond, and it would be something for the good-wife to gather up the scraps for. She has often said: 'If we had but a goose!' Now she can have one — and she shall, too! Will you exchange? I will give you my sheep for your goose, and say 'thank you' besides."

The other had no objection, so the peasant had his will and

his goose. He was now close to the town; he was wearied with the heat and the crowd, folk and cattle pushing past him, thronging on the road, in the ditch, and close up to the turnpike-man's cabbage-garden, where his one hen was tied up, lest in her fright she should lose her way and be carried off. It was a short-backed hen: she winked with one eye, crying, "Cluck, cluck!" What she was thinking of I can't say, but what the peasant thought on seeing her, was this: "That is the prettiest hen I have ever seen — much prettier than any of our parson's chickens. I should very much like to have her. A hen can always pick up a grain here and there — can provide for herself. I almost think it would be a good plan to take her instead of the goose. Shall we exchange?" he asked. "Exchange?" repeated the owner; "not a bad idea!" So it was done; the turnpike-man got the goose, the peasant the hen.

He had transacted a deal of business since first starting on his way to the town; hot was he, and wearied too; he must have a dram and a bit of bread. He was on the point of entering an inn, when the innkeeper met him in the doorway swinging a sack chock-full of something.

"What have you there?" asked the peasant.

"Mellow apples," was the answer, "a whole sackful for swine."

"What a quantity! wouldn't my wife like to see so many! Why, the last year we had only one single apple on the whole tree at home. Ah! I wish my wife could see them!"

"Well, what will you give me for them?"

"Give for them? why, I will give you my hen." So he gave the hen, took the apples, and entered the inn, and going straight up to the bar, set his sack upright against the stove without considering that there was a fire lighted inside. A good many strangers were present, among them two Englishmen, both with their pockets full of gold, and fond of laying wagers, as Englishmen in stories are wont to be.

Presently there came a sound from the stove, "Suss — suss — suss!" the apples were roasting. "What is that?" folk asked, and soon heard the whole history of the horse that had been exchanged, first for a cow, and lastly for a sack of rotten apples.

"Well! won't you get a good sound cuff from your wife, when you go home?" said one of the Englishmen. "Something heavy enough to fell an ox, I warn you!"

"I shall get kisses, not cuffs," replied the peasant. "My wife will say, 'Whatever the good-man does is right.'"

"A wager!" cried the Englishmen, "for a hundred pounds?"

"Say rather a bushelful," quoth the peasant, "and I can only lay my bushel of apples with myself and the good-wife, but that will be more than full measure, I trow."

"Done!" cried they. And the innkeeper's cart was brought out forthwith, the Englishmen got into it, the peasant got into it, the rotten apples got into it, and away they sped to the peasant's cottage.

"Good evening, wife."

"Same to you, good-man."

"Well, I have exchanged the horse, not sold it."

"Of course," said the wife, taking his hand, and in her eagerness to listen noticing neither the sack nor the strangers.

"I exchanged the horse for a cow."

"O! how delightful! now we can have milk, butter, and cheese on our table. What a capital idea!"

"Yes, but I exchanged the cow for a sheep."

"Better and better!" cried the wife. "You are always so thoughtful; we have only just grass enough for a sheep. But now we shall have ewe's milk, and ewe's cheese, and woolen stockings, nay, woolen jackets too; and a cow would not give us that; she loses all her hairs. But you are always such a clever fellow."

"But the ewe I exchanged again for a goose."

"What! shall we really keep Michaelmas this year, good-man? You are always thinking of what will please me, and that was a beautiful thought. The goose can be tethered to the willow-tree and grow fat for Michaelmas Day."

"But I gave the goose away for a hen," said the peasant.

"A hen? well, that was a good exchange," said his wife. "A hen will lay eggs, sit upon them, and we shall have chickens. Fancy! a hen-yard! that is just the thing I have always wished for most."

"Ah, but I exchanged the hen for a sack of mellow apples."

"Then I must give thee a kiss," cried the wife. "Thanks, my own husband. And now I have something to tell. When you were gone I thought how I could get a right good dinner ready for you: omelets with parsley. Now I had the eggs, but not the parsley. So I went over to the schoolmaster's; they have parsley, I know, but the woman is so crabbed, she wanted something for it. Now what could I give her? nothing grows in our garden, not even a rotten apple, not even that had I for her; but now I can give her ten, nay, a whole sackful. That is famous, good-man!" and she kissed him again.

"Well done!" cried the Englishmen. "Always down hill, and always happy! Such a sight is worth the money!" And so quite contentedly they paid the bushelful of gold pieces to the peasant, who had got kisses, not cuffs, by his bargains.

Certainly virtue is her own reward, when the wife is sure that her husband is the wisest man in the world, and that whatever he does is right. So now you have heard this old story that was once told to me, and I hope have learnt the moral.

THE JEWISH GIRL.

THERE was in the charity-school among the other children a little Jewish girl, so clever and good; the best, in fact, of them all; but one of the lessons she could not attend — the one when religion was taught, for this was a Christian school.

Then she held her geography book before her to learn from it, or she did her sum; but the lesson was quickly learned, the sum was soon done; the book might be there open before her, but she did not read, she was listening; and the teacher soon noticed that she was attending more intently, even, than any of the rest.

"Read your book," the teacher urged, mildly and earnestly; but she looked at him with her black sparkling eyes, and when he put questions to her also, she knew more than all the others. She had listened, understood, and kept his words.

Her father was a poor honest man, and when first he brought her to the school, he had made the stipulation that she should not be taught the Christian faith. To let her go away during the Scripture lesson might however have given offense, and raised thoughts of various kinds in the minds of the other children, and so she stayed; but this could not go on any longer.

The teacher went to her father, and told him that either he must take his daughter away from the school, or consent to her becoming a Christian.

"I cannot bear to see those burning eyes, that yearning, that thirst of the soul, as it were, after the words of the gospel," said the teacher.

And the father burst into tears. "I know but little myself of our own religion, but her mother was a daughter of Israel, of strong and firm faith, and on her dying bed I made a vow

that our child should never receive Christian baptism ; that vow I must keep ; it is to me as a covenant with God.

And the little Jewish girl was taken away from the school of the Christians.

Years rolled by.

In one of the smallest towns of Jutland served as maid in a plain burgher's house a poor girl of the Mosaic faith ; this was Sarah. Her hair was black as ebony, her eyes dark, and yet brilliant and full of light, such as you see among the daughters of the East ; and the expression in the countenance of the grown-up girl was still that of the child who sat on the school-room bench, listening with thoughtful and wistful eye.

Each Sunday sounded from the church the pealing of the organ to the song of the congregation, and the tones floated over the street, into the house, where the Jewish girl attended to her work, diligent and faithful in her calling. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," this was her law ; but her Sabbath was a day of labor to the Christians, and only in her heart could she keep it holy ; and that was not enough for her. But then the thought arose in her soul, "What matters it before God about days and hours ;" and on the Sunday of the Christians her hour of devotion remained undisturbed. If, then, the organ's peal and the psalm-tunes reached over to her, where she stood in the kitchen, even this became a quiet and consecrated spot. She would read then the treasure and peculiar property of her people, the Old Testament, and this alone ; for she kept deep in her heart what her father had told the teacher and herself when she was taken from the school — the vow made to her dying mother, "that Sarah should not be baptized, not forsake the faith of her fathers." The New Testament was, and should remain forever, a sealed book to her ; and yet she knew much of it ; it shone to her through the recollections of childhood.

One evening she sat in a corner of the parlor, and heard her master reading aloud. She might listen, she thought, for this was not the gospel ; nay ! 'twas out of an old story-book he read : she might stay. And he read of a Hungarian knight, taken captive by a Turkish pasha, who had him yoked with oxen to the plough ; and he was driven with lashes, and had to suffer pain and ignominy beyond endurance.

But at home the knight's wife sold all her jewels, and mortgaged castle and lands, and his friends contributed large sums, for enormous was the ransom demanded; still it was raised, and he was delivered out of thralldom and disgrace. Sick and suffering, he came to his home. But soon resounded far and near the summons to war against the foe of Christianity. The sick man heard the call, and had neither peace nor rest any longer; he was placed on his charger; the blood came again to his cheeks, his strength seemed to return, and he rode forth to victory. The very pasha who had him yoked to the plough, and made him suffer pain and scorn, became his captive. He was carried home to the castle dungeon, but before his first hour there had elapsed the knight came, and asked the prisoner, "What dost thou think awaiteth thee?"

"I know," said the Turk; "retribution."

"Yes, the Christian's retribution," said the knight. "Christ taught us to forgive our enemies, to love our fellow-men. God is love! Depart in peace to thy home and thy dear ones, and be gentle and good to those who suffer."

Then the prisoner burst into tears.

"How could I believe such a thing could be possible? Torments and sufferings I looked forward to as a certainty, and I took poison, which must kill me; within a few hours I shall die. There is no remedy. But before I die make known to me the faith that embraces such an amount of love and mercy; it is great and divine! In it let me die; let me die a Christian!" and his prayer was granted.

This was the legend, the history which was read; they all listened to it with attention, but deepest sank it into the heart of her who sat alone in the corner — the servant-maid — Sarah, the Jewess. Heavy tears stood in her black sparkling eyes while she sat here, as once on the school-bench, and felt the greatness of the gospel. The tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Let not my child become a Christian!" were the mother's last words on her dying bed, and they rang through her soul with those of the law, "Honor thy father and thy mother!"

"Still I have not been baptized! they call me 'the Jewess;' the neighbors' boys did so, hooting at me last Sunday as I

stood outside the open church door, and looked in where the altar-lights burned and the congregation sang. Ever since my school-days, up to this hour — even though I have tried to close my eyes against it — a power from Christianity has like a sunbeam shone into my heart. But, my mother, I will not give thee sorrow in thy grave! I will not betray the vow my father made to thee; I will not read the Christian's Bible. Have not I the God of my fathers? On Him let me rest my head!"

And years rolled by.

The husband died, the wife was left behind in hard plight. Now she could no longer afford to have a maid; but Sarah did not forsake the widow; she became her help in distress, and kept the household together; she worked till late in the night, and got bread for the house by the labor of her hands. There were no near relatives to help a family where the mother grew weaker each day, lingering for months on a bed of sickness. Sarah, gentle and pious, watched, nursed, and worked, and became the blessing of the poor home.

"There lies the Bible," said the invalid; "read to me this wearisome evening; I sadly want to hear God's word."

And Sarah bowed her head; she folded her hands round the Bible, which she opened, and read aloud to the sick woman; now and again the tears welled forth, but her eyes shone clearer, even as the darkness cleared from her soul. "Mother, thy child shall not receive the baptism of the Christians, shall not be named in their communion; in this we will be united here on earth, but above this there is — is a greater unity — even in God. 'He goes with us beyond the grave;' 'It is He who pours water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.' I understand it! I do not know myself how I came to it! through Him it is — in Him — Christ!"

And she trembled as she named the holy name; a baptism of fire streamed through her, stronger than her frame could bear, and she bent down, more powerless even than she by whom she watched.

"Poor Sarah!" they said; "she is worn out with labor and watching."

They took her to the hospital for the poor; there she died; thence she was borne to her grave; not to the Christians' grave-yard; that was not the place for the Jewish girl: no, outside, by the wall, her grave was dug.

And God's sun, which shone upon the graves of the Christians, shines also upon that of the Jewish girl; and the hymns which are sung by the graves of the Christians resound by her grave beyond the wall; thither, too, reaches the promise: "There is resurrection in Christ, in Him, the Saviour, who said to his disciples, 'John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.'"

TWO BROTHERS.

ON one of the Danish islands, where ancient judgment-seats loom up mid the cornfields, and mighty trees lift their heads in the beech forests, lies a little town, with red roofs over the low houses. In one of these curious matters were being prepared over the coals and embers on the hearth: there was testing in crucibles; there was triturating and distilling; there was pounding of drugs in mortars: an old man stood over the whole.

"One must *rightly* combine the right matters," said he; "yea, the right, the fitness, the truth in each created thing, we are to recognize and hold."

In the chamber, by the good good-woman of the house, sat two sons of hers, — yet young, but with grown thoughts. Of right and reason had the mother ever counseled them; and to hold fast to truth, which is the face of *God* made visible on earth.

The elder of the boys seemed arch and pert: his delight was, to read of nature's laws, of suns and stars — no tale could give him better joy. O, what bliss, to go on journeys of discovery, or to contrive to imitate birds' wings, and fly! — yea, *that* were the true thing to find! Father was right, and so was mother: 'tis truth doth hold the world in shape.

The younger brother was of a quieter mind, and lived but in his books: did he read of Jacob, — how he clad himself in sheepskins to resemble Esau and therewith to wrong him of his right of birth, — in anger the boy clinched his little hand, vexed at the fraud; did he read of tyrants, and the wrong and misrule that reign in the earth, — tears filled his eye. Thought of the right and of truth, that ought and were to triumph, swayed him mightily. One night the little one had gone to bed; but the curtains hung awry, and let in some light upon him, by which he lay with book in hand, and read to end the history of Solon.

And thought did lift and bear him strangely on: 'twas as if the couch had grown into a vessel under sail — was he dreaming? or what meant it else? He glided over rolling billows, — coursing swift athwart the sea of ages: his ear caught Solon's voice, proclaiming, in the stranger's tongue, — and yet the boy did understand, — the Danish motto: "Justice buildeth up a land."

And the Genius of Humanity stood in the midst of the lowly chamber, bowed over the boy, and left a kiss upon his brow: "Be strong in glory, and strong in the battle's heat: with truth fixed in thy breast, go forth on thy way unto the home of truth!"

The elder brother was not yet abed; he stood at the window, gazing out upon the mists that arose from the plain: they were not elves, a-dancing over yonder; the old nurse, 'tis true, had taught him so; but he knew better: they were vapors, warmer than the air; and hence they rose. A shooting-star lit up the sky; and the boy's thoughts were instantly gathered up from the mists of earth, into the region of the shining meteor. The stars twinkled in the firmament, and it was as if golden threads were floating from them to the earth.

"Come with me!" it sang and rang in the boy's heart; and the Race's mighty Genius bore him — swifter far than bird or arrow, or aught of earth that flies — out into Space, where ray on ray from star to star bound all the rolling globes to one another; the earth was spinning in the rare empyrean, city crowding close on city. Through the spheres resounded, —

"What is space, and where is distance, while the lofty sprite of Thought bears thee on high?"

And again the youth was at the window, peering forth, and the younger brother lay abed; and their mother called them by their names: "Andrew and Hans Christian!"

Denmark knoweth them, the world knows both the brothers, — ÖRSTED.

THE OLD CHURCH-BELL.

IN the German land of Wurtemburg, where the acacia-trees bloom luxuriantly by the way-side, and apple and pear-trees bend in autumn with the burden of ripe fruit, lies the little town of Marbach ; it is small and insignificant, but beautifully situated near the Neckar, that flows rapidly past towns and vineyards and old baronial castles, to join its waters with those of the mighty Rhine.

It was late in the year, the vine tendrils were covered with red leaves, and gusty showers and chilly winds were increasing. This was not a pleasant time for poor people. The days were dark, but it was darker still within the small old houses. One of these stood with its gable end toward the street ; the windows were small, it was poor and plain in appearance ; and poor as the dwelling were those who dwelt within, but honest and industrious, and love and fear of God was in their hearts' treasury. One child more God was about to give them ; the hour had come when they expected it, and the mother lay in pain and suffering. Then pealed from the church-tower the deep joyful sound of chiming bells. It was a festival day, and the solemn sound of the bell filled the heart of the sufferer with faith and devotion ; she lifted her heart in fervent prayer to God, and in that same moment her little son was born ; but she felt happy beyond words. The bell from the church-tower seemed to peal forth her joy over town and country. Two bright child-eyes looked at her, and the baby's hair shone like gold. On that dark November day had her child been welcomed into the world by the chiming bells ; the mother and father kissed it, and wrote in their Bible," "The 10th of November, 1759, God gave us a son," and added afterward, "he received at his baptism the names Johann Christoph Friedrich."

And what became of the little fellow, the poor boy from the small town of Marbach?

At that time nobody knew — not even the old church-bell, however high it was placed, and though it had first rung and sung for him — who should one day sing the most beautiful "Lay of the Bell."

And the little one grew, and the world grew larger before him; the parents removed to another town, but dear friends of theirs still stayed behind in little Marbach; and so it came to pass that mother and son one day went there on a visit. The boy was as yet only six years old, but he already knew parts of the Bible, and the pious old hymns; many an evening had he sat on his little cane stool and listened when his father read aloud of Gellert's Fables and Klopstock's "Messiah," and burning tears had he and his sister shed when they heard of Him who suffered death on the cross on Golgotha, that He might save us.

At the time of their first visit to Marbach, the town had not much changed, and, indeed, it was not very long since they had left it. The houses stood exactly as before, with pointed gables, sloping walls, and small windows; but in the church-yard were new graves; and there, low among weeds, close by the wall, lay the old church-bell; it had fallen from its high position; it had got a flaw, and could ring no longer, and a new one had replaced it.

The mother and son had entered the church-yard; they stood still before the old bell, and the mother told her little boy how this bell through hundreds of years had been useful; it had pealed at baptisms, and happy weddings, and at funerals. Its peals had told of joy and of the horrors of fire; yes, the bell's song comprehended a whole human life.

The boy never forgot what his mother on that day told him; it sounded within his breast till, when grown to be a man, he could pour it out in song. And the mother told him how this old bell had pealed to her comfort and joy in her hour of trial, had rung and sung when her little boy was given her. But the child looked almost with awe at the great old bell, and he stooped over it, and kissed it, as it lay there, old and broken, and thrown away among nettles and rank weeds.

And it lingered in the memory of the little boy, who shot up in poverty, tall and thin, and with reddish hair and freckled

face — yes, that's what he looked like; but he had a pair of eyes, clear and blue as the deep water. And how did it fare with him? Well, he had been fortunate, enviably fortunate! He had been graciously received in the military school, and even in the division where great people's children were; this was an honor, a piece of good fortune; and he wore top-boots, a cravat, and a powdered wig, while he got learning on the march-halt-right-about-face system. This, indeed, might lead to something!

The old church-bell, hidden and forgotten, would some day no doubt go into the smelting furnace; and what next would become of it? Well, that was impossible to say, and no one could tell either what would come out of the bell within the young man's breast. There was a seething within him; it rang and echoed, it must sound forth into the wide world, and the more cramped the space within the school walls, the more deafening the sound of "march! halt! right-about face!" the stronger rang it within the youth's breast; and what he felt he sang to his comrades, and it resounded far beyond the boundaries of the land. But it was not for this he had got admission to the school, and board and clothes. He was already numbered as a screw in the great watchwork to which we all belong, as useful matter-of-fact pieces. How imperfectly do we understand ourselves, however, and how then shall others, even the best, always understand us? But it is the pressure that forms the precious stone. The pressure was here; in the course of time would the world recognize the precious stone?

There was a great festival in the capital of the country. Thousands of lamps shone, and rockets sparkled; that splendor is still remembered — remembered because of him who then in tears and sorrow tried unnoticed to escape across his own country. Far away must he go from his native land, from mother and dear ones, or perish in the stream of commonplace life.

The old bell was well off; it lay in the shelter of the church wall of Marbach, hidden and forgotten! The wind swept over it, and the wind could have told of him at whose birth the bell had rung; could have told how coldly it had blown upon him, when, weary and exhausted, he sank down in a forest in

the neighboring country, and all his treasures, all his hopes for the future, were a few written pages of "Fiesco;" the wind could have told how his only patrons — all artists, indeed — stole away, while he read it aloud, to amuse themselves at skittles. The wind could have told of the pale fugitive who lived for weeks and months in the poor inn, where the host was brawling and drinking, and wild merriment was going on while he wrote of the Ideal. Hard days, dreary days! The heart must itself suffer and realize what it would sing to the world.

Dark days and cold nights passed over the old bell; it felt them not; but the bell within the human breast, that feels hard times: how fared that young man? and how fared the old bell? Well, the bell went far away, farther than its peals could ever have been heard from its lofty tower; the young man, — yes, the bell within his breast sounded afar into distant lands, which his eye should never see, his foot never tread; it sounded and resounded away over the ocean and through the wide world. First you must hear about the bell. It was taken away from Marbach, was sold for old metal, and was now to go into a smelting furnace in the land of Bavaria. But how and when did it come hither? Yes, let the bell say it if it can; it is not of much consequence; but certain is it that it came to the capital of Bavaria. Many years had passed since it fell from the tower; now it was to be melted down, and to go to the casting of a great and glorious monument, a statue of one of Germany's great men. Now listen and hear how strange and beautiful things may happen in this world! In Denmark, on one of the green islands, where the beech-tree grows, and there are many old cairns, there was once a poor little boy, who used to wear wooden shoes, and carry the meals, wrapped in a small napkin, to his father, who was working on the wharves at carving figure-heads for ships. This poor child had become his country's pride, and carved in marble beauties at which the world wondered; and he it was to whom now the noble task was given to mould of clay a form of grandeur and beauty that was to be cast in bronze — the statue of him whose name the father wrote in the Bible — Johann Christoph Friedrich.

And the bronze streamed glowing into the mould. The church-bell — ah! nobody thought of its home, or of its chimes and peals that had died away long ago — the bell, too, flowed into the mould, and became the head and the breast of the statue that stands now unveiled before the old palace. There it stands, on the place where he whom it represents walked while alive, amid struggles and strife, oppressed by the world around him — he, the boy from Marbach; the pupil from the Carl's school, the fugitive; Germany's great immortal poet, who sang of the liberator of Switzerland, and the divinely inspired Maid of France.

It was a splendid sunny day; flags waved from towers and roofs in the royal town of Stuttgart. The bells chimed for joy and festival; one bell alone was silent; but it shone in the bright sunlight, it shone from the breast and the countenance of that noble form. A hundred years had passed away since the day when in Marbach's church-tower it chimed joy and comfort to the suffering mother, who in that lowly house bore her poor little boy — one day to be the rich man, who would give the world treasures which it calls blessed, he the heart-stirring poet of noble women, the glorious singer of what is great and beautiful, — JOHANN CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH SCHILLER.

THE LAST PEARL.

WE are in a rich, a happy house; all are cheerful and full of joy, — master, servants, and friends of the family; for on this day an heir, a son had been born, and mother and child were doing exceedingly well.

The burning lamp in the bed-chamber had been partly shaded, and the windows were guarded by heavy curtains of some costly silken fabric. The carpet was thick and soft as a mossy lawn, and everything invited to slumber — was charmingly suggestive of repose; and the nurse found that, for she slept; and here she might sleep, for everything was good and blessed. The guardian spirit of the house leaned against the head of the bed; over the child at the mother's breast there spread as it were a net of shining stars in endless number, and each star was a pearl of happiness. All the good stars of life had brought their gifts to the new-born one; here sparkled health, wealth, fortune, and love — in short, everything that man can wish for on earth.

"Everything has been presented here," said the guardian Spirit.

"No, not everything," said a voice near him, the voice of the child's good Angel. "One fairy has not yet brought her gift; but she will do so some day; even if years should elapse first, she will bring her gift. The *last pearl* is yet wanting."

"Wanting! here nothing may be wanting; and if it should be the case, let me go and seek the powerful fairy; let us betake ourselves to her!"

"She will come! she will not fail! her pearl must be given to bind the wreath together!"

"But where dwells she? Where is her home? — tell me, that I may go and fetch the pearl."

"Wilt thou have it so?" said the child's guardian Angel.

"Well, then, I will show thee where she must be sought. But she has no abiding-place: she visits now the emperor's palace, now the poorest peasant-cot, and everywhere she leaves her trace behind her; to all she brings her gift, be it a world or a plaything; this child, too, she will not forget. But as thou canst not wait, well, we will go and fetch the pearl, the Last Pearl needed to complete this wealth of gifts."

So hand in hand the spirits flew to the spot which was in that hour the fairy's home.

It was a large house, with dark passages, empty chambers, all strangely still; a whole row of windows stood wide open, so that the fresh air should stream in, and the long white curtains moved and shook in the wind.

On the floor lay an open coffin, within it rested the corpse of a woman, still in her prime of life; she was covered with a profusion of the loveliest, freshest roses, so as to leave visible only the folded white hands and the noble earnest countenance, wearing the high and spiritual beauty of Death.

Her husband and children surrounded the corpse, the youngest clinging to his father's arm. They had come to bid the last "farewell," and her husband kissed for the last time the hand which was now like a withered leaf, but which had once clasped his in warmth of life and love. Large salt tears fell in heavy drops upon the floor, but not a word was spoken. The silence expressed a world of grief; silent and sobbing they left the chamber.

A lighted candle burnt in the room; the flame strove with the wind and shot up his long red tongue. Strangers entered the room, closed the lid over the coffin, hammered in the nails — so strangely resounded the hammer-strokes through the silent spaces of the house! so bitterly they smote upon the bleeding hearts within it!

"Whither wouldst thou lead me?" inquired the Guardian of the household. "No fairy can dwell here, no precious pearl among the rare gifts of life."

"Yes, she dwells here, in this very spot, in this holy hour," said the child's Angel, pointing into a corner where — in the very seat once occupied, amid flowers and pictures, by the dead mother, whence she, the sunbeam of the house, once dif-

fused happiness and love around her — now sat a strange woman clad in long, heavy robes. It was Sorrow, and she ruled here in the mother's place. A scalding tear rolled down upon her lap; it became a pearl, it sparkled with all the hues of the rainbow, and as the angel caught it up it shone with the sevenfold lustre of a star.

"The Pearl of Sorrow, that is the Last Pearl that cannot, must not be lacking! through which the light and splendor of all other gifts are augmented. Behold in it a reflection of the rainbow, which unites earth with heaven. In the place of each of our beloved ones who die to us on earth we gain one friend more to welcome us in Paradise. When the night is dark we look up toward the stars, toward infinity! and enfolded in Sorrow's Pearl lie the wings of Psyche that shall bear us hence away!"

THE BISHOP OF BÖRGLUM AND HIS KINDRED.

WE are now in Jutland, near the Wild Marsh; we can hear the roar of the Atlantic Ocean, rolling hard by; in front of us rises a great sand hill, and we are driving toward it, slowly driving through the deep sand. An old, large, rambling building crowns this sand hill: it is Börglum Monastery; the largest wing is the church. It is late evening by the time we have ascended the hill, but the air is clear, the nights are bright, and we can still enjoy a prospect far and wide, over meadow and moor as far as Aalborg Fiord, over field and heath, till they are bounded by the dark-blue ocean.

We are on the hill, we drive on through barn and shed, then turn round and pass through the gates, on toward the old castle-court, where lime-trees stand in a row along the walls; here they get shelter from wind and weather, they thrive, and their leafy branches almost hide the windows.

We ascend the winding stone staircase; we tread the long corridors, under a ceiling of wood-work; the wind whistles round us with strange, wild notes, both within and without the building, and we begin to tell each other tales of the past — such tales as one remembers when feeling half-frightened. The forms of murdered men seem to our fancy to glide silently past us; the wild wind, as it rushes through the church, still seems to sing mass for their souls; the mind is thrown back into the days of old, pictures them, lives in them.

. . . . . .

There is a wreck upon the coast; the Bishop's men are busy down on the shore; the sea has spared some, but they spare none, and the water will wash away all trace of the crimson blood. The stranded goods — and there are many — all belong to the Bishop. The waves cast on the shore goodly barrels filled with costly wines, meet for the monks' cellars, though these are already well furnished with ale and

mead; there is no lack of stores for the winter in their kitchens, and the ponds outside harbor abundance of fish. The Bishop of Börglum is a man of might; he has lands in plenty, but he would fain have more; all must give way before Bishop Oluf. A rich kinsman of his, at Thy, is just dead; neither kin nor kind to her will the widow find Bishop Oluf Glob. Her late husband held rule over the whole district, saving only the convent lands; her son is in foreign parts, having been sent away, at his own wish, when a mere boy, to learn foreign customs; for some years no tidings have come from him — perchance he may be in his grave, may never return home to take the rule, which now his mother must assume.

"How now! shall a woman rule?" asks the Bishop. He cites her before the courts; but to what purpose? She has done nothing against the law, she has right and justice on her side.

Bishop Oluf of Börglum, what ponderest thou? what writest thou on the white parchment? What is it that, sealed by the episcopal signet, thou givest in charge to knights and squires, who ride away, bearing it out of the country, to the pope's own city?

The fall of the leaf, the season of storms and wrecks, is past; icy winter follows. Twice has it returned without bringing tidings from abroad; but this third time it brings back the knights and squires, who bear a letter from the pope, excommunicating the bold widow who dared oppose the Bishop. An interdict is laid upon her lands, a curse upon herself. Cast out must she be from church and congregation; no one shall dare to lend her a helping hand, friends and kinsfolk must shun her as though she were a leper. All fall off from her; but she holds fast her trust in God, who will yet be her strength and bulwark. And one among her servants, one faithful maiden, keeps by her side; and together they guide the plough over fields where the corn still flourishes, though the land has been cursed.

Seven years has she spent thus in poverty, labor, and desolation, still the Bishop is not content: he calls upon her to yield up her lands to him. She has two oxen left; she har-

nesses them to her carriage, and she and her faithful handmaiden drive away over the heath, out of Danish land. She is now a stranger among strange people, speaking an unknown tongue, and surrounded by foreign ways and customs. She drives on; instead of green hills mountains rise around her, and vineyards instead of beech groves. Travelling merchants pass by, carefully watching their heavily-laden wagons, and in dire dread of an attack from robber-knights. But the two poor women, in their miserable equipage, drawn by two black oxen, may pass securely along the lonely roads, through the thick forests. They are now in France; they meet a stately knight, followed by twelve mail-clad men; the knight gazes in surprise upon this strange conveyance, and asks the younger of the women whence they come, and whither they are journeying; she explains that they come from Thy, in Denmark, tells the story of her woes, and, behold! how wonderfully has Providence guided her steps! the stranger knight is her son! He holds out his hand, he embraces her, and the poor mother weeps — years have past since she has wept.

It is the fall of the leaf, the season of wrecks; the sea washes wine-casks ashore for the Bishop's cellars; in his kitchen the wild deer is roasting; it is pleasant and warm within doors, while winter freezes without. But tidings are brought; Jens Glob has returned to Thy with his mother; Jens Glob calls upon the Bishop to cede to him his lands and his rights.

"Much good may it do him!" quoth the Bishop. "Leave the quarrel alone, Knight Jens!"

Another year has passed: again returns the fall of the leaf, the season of wrecks; freezing winter follows, and the white bees are swarming, stinging the traveller's face. A sharp day, say those who have been out of doors. Jens Glob, who keeps at home, close to the fire, stands lost in thought, singes his dress, burns a hole in it unawares. "For all this, I will master thee yet, Bishop of Börglum! Thou art safe from the law, sheltered by the pope's mantle, but not safe from Jens Glob!" He writes a letter to his brother-in-law, Sir Oluf Hase of Salling, bidding him meet him on Christmas Eve at Hoidberg Church; the bishop has to read mass there, and must therefore leave Börglum for Thyland.

Meadow and moor lie buried under ice and snow; over them speed horse and horseman, the whole cavalcade, the Bishop, his clerks, and his squires; they take the short-cut, among the reeds, where the wind sings such a doleful song. Blow thy brass trumpet, thou fur-clad minstrel! it sounds pleasantly in the clear air. On they ride, over heath and moor, where Fata Morgana dresses her magic bowers in the warm summer-time; on they ride, southward, toward Hoidberg Church.

The wind blows *his* trumpet louder and louder; a terrible storm is rising. On, on through the storm, over meadow and moor, fiord and river. The house of God stands secure amid the storm; the bishop will reach it surely — that can hardly Sir Oluf Hase, keenly though he ride; he tarries on the opposite side of the fiord with his men, whom Jens Glob has summoned to aid him in calling the Bishop to his account. God's own house is the court of justice: the lights are kindled in the heavy brass candlesticks; the storm without screams out his sentence, his doom. A cry thrills through the air, over moor and heath, over the rolling roaring billows.

Meantime, Oluf Hase is detained at Otto Sound; no ferry-boat can cross the fiord in such a hurricane. So he dismisses his men, bids them keep horse and armor, and take his farewell to his wife; alone will he risk his life in the raging flood; they must be his witnesses that it is not his fault if Jens Glob should stand unsupported in Hoidberg Church. But his faithful squires will not be thus dismissed, they will follow him into the dangerous waters. Ten of them are washed away by the tide; Oluf Hase himself and his two youngest squires reach the opposite shore in safety; they have still four miles to ride.

It is past midnight; it is Christmas Eve. The wind has abated; the church is lighted up, the lights shine through the panes over meadow and heath. The service is ended; the house of God is so still that the wax can be heard dropping from the candles to the stones of the floor. Oluf Hase arrives.

Jens Glob meets him in the porch. "Good-day! you are late! the Bishop and I are reconciled now!"

"Are you so?" replies Oluf. "Then shall neither the Bishop nor thou leave the church alive!"

And Oluf's sword flashes out of its sheath, and splits the church's wooden door, which Jens Glob has placed between them, in two. "Hold, dear brother-in-law! see first what sort of reconciliation is this! I have slain the Bishop and all his men. Not one of them will wag his tongue again, and not a word more need be spoken of the wrongs done to my mother."

The wax-lights on the altar burn red, but a redder light shines from the church-floor; there lie, with cloven skulls, and weltering in their blood, the Bishop and all his train. It is the holy eve of Christmas, and all is hushed and still.

But on the third evening after Christmas Day the funeral bells are tolling in Börglum Convent. The murdered Bishop and his squires are laid out in state under a black canopy, lighted by candelabra swathed in crape; robed in a mantle bordered with silver, the crosier in his powerless hand, lies the corpse, the once mighty lord. Incense fills the air, the monks sing a funeral dirge; sadly, bitterly, it rises up, is caught up by the wind, repeated, borne over the whole country. Sometimes the wild, accusing voice sinks to rest a while, but it never dies out, always it rises up again, singing its dismal strains late into our own century, singing of the unjust Bishop and his cruel kinsman. On many a dark night the timid peasant hears it, as he drives past Börglum Convent through the heavy sandy road; the sleepless listener within Börglum's thick walls hears it too. The church door has long been walled up; but to the eyes of the superstitious the door is seen to open, the lights stream out from the brass crowns, the church stands in its ancient splendor, filled with the smoke of incense, and the monks still sing mass for the murdered Bishop, who lies there in his silver-edged robe, with the crosier in his hand, while from his pale proud forehead shines the bloody wound, red like fire! A sad picture of the evil passions that make this world so desolate!

Sink into the grave, sink into the night of oblivion, ye dismal memories of a barbarous past!

. . . . . .

Listen to the voice of the wind, as it sweeps across the rolling sea! A storm is raging without, that will cost many lives: the sea has not changed its nature because the times are changed. To-night it is as it were all mouths to devour; to-morrow perhaps it will be as it were all eyes to mirror oneself in — just as in the old times we have now banished from our thoughts. O! be merciful, if thou canst, old Sea!

Morning comes; the sun shines into our rooms, the wind still blows; there are tidings of a wreck, as in old time. Last night, down by Lokken, the little fishing-town with red roofs that we can see from our windows, a ship was wrecked. But the boatmen made a bridge between the wreck and the land, all on board were saved, were brought to land, had beds found for them; to-day they are invited to Börglum Convent. In these comfortable rooms they will find a hospitable welcome, meet friendly faces, hear kind voices, speaking their own language, and songs of their own land. And the telegraph will announce to the relatives of the shipwrecked, in their own home, that they are saved; so now their hearts are light, and gayly will they tread the dance this evening in the chambers of Börglum.

Blessed be thou, new, better age! bring a fresh and purified current of air through our towns! let thy sunbeams shine into our hearts and minds! bring us thoughts of gladness, that the dark traditions of the cruel times of old may pass away like a dream!

THE STORM MOVES THE SIGN-BOARDS.

IN olden times, when Grandfather was quite a little boy and wore red trousers and a red jacket, with a sash round his waist, and a feather in his cap — for thus in his childhood little boys were dressed when they were very smart — so many things were different from what they are now. There were often pageants in the street — such ones as we do not see nowadays, for these things are abolished: they became so old-fashioned; but pleasant it is to hear Grandfather tell of them.

It must indeed have been a show when the shoemakers moved sign-boards, when they changed Corporation Hall. On their waving silk banner were painted a large boot and a two-headed eagle; the younger journeymen, with red and white ribbons fluttering down from their shirt-sleeves, carried the welcome-cup and the box; the older ones wore drawn swords with lemons on the points. There was a full band, but the finest of all the instruments was "the Bird," as Grandfather called the long pole with the half-moon, with all its ringing, tingling, and dangling things — real Turkish music. It was lifted and swung, and it almost hurt the eyes to look at it when the sun shone upon all that gold, silver, and brass.

Before the procession ran Harlequin, in clothes made of patches of every possible color, and with black face, and bells on his head just like a sledge-horse; and he beat the people with his wand, that smacked without hurting, and they squeezed each other to get onward; little boys and girls fell over their own legs straight down into the gutters; while old dames elbowed their way, looking cross and scolding. Some laughed, others chatted; there were people on the steps and in the windows — nay, even on the roofs. The sun shone; now and then, indeed, a little rain fell, but that was a good thing for the farmer; and even if enough fell to make the people wringing wet, why, that was a true blessing to the land.

Ah! what things Grandfather could tell! He had, when a little boy seen all that grand show in its fullest splendor. The oldest journeyman of the Corporation delivered a speech from the scaffold where the sign-board was hung out; the speech ran in verses just like a piece of poetry, which, indeed, it was; there had been three about it, and before making it, they had drunk a whole bowl of punch, so that it might be really good. And the people gave cheers for the speech, but still more cheers for the Harlequin when he appeared on the scaffold and mimicked the speaker. The fool did his foolery so capitally, and drank mead from dram-glasses, which he then flung out among the people, who grasped them in the air. Grandfather had one of them, which the mortar-mixer had caught and given him. It was fun, indeed. And the sign-board hung, with flowers and wreaths, on the new Corporation Hall.

Such a sight, one never forgets, however old one becomes, Grandfather said; and he, indeed, never forgot it, though afterward he saw much show and grandeur and knew how to tell about it; but funniest of all it was, when he told of the moving of the sign-boards in the great city.

Grandfather had been there with his parents while he was a little boy; and that was the first time he saw the largest town of the country.

Such a number of people were in the streets, that he thought the "Moving of the Sign-boards" was just then going on; and there were many sign-boards to be moved: one might have filled hundreds of rooms with these pictures if they had been hung up inside instead of out-doors. Thus, there were all kinds of garments painted where the tailors lived; they could change people till they became genteel instead of vulgar. There were tobacconists' sign-boards with the most charming little boys, smoking cigars, just as they do in reality; there were sign-boards with butter and red herrings, clergymen's ruffs, and coffins; and besides there were other sign-boards with inscriptions and announcements. Indeed, one might go for a whole day up and down the streets and be gratified by looking at pictures; and then at the same time one learned what people those were who lived inside: they had

themselves hung their signs outside; and this is a very good thing, Grandfather said: in a large town it is so instructive to know what is in-doors.

Well, then, that funny affair with the sign-boards happened just as Grandfather came to town; he said so himself, and he was not then thinking of any mischief, as mother used to say he was when he wanted to make a fool of me — he looked quite trustworthy.

The first night after he had come to the great town, there was as awful weather as has ever been told about in the papers — such weather as there had not been within the memory of man. All the air was filled with tiles; old wooden fences were overturned; nay, there was a wheelbarrow that ran by itself along the street to save its life. There was a howling in the air, and a wailing and shaking; it was, indeed, a terrible storm. The water in the canal ran quite over the banks, not knowing where it dared be. The Storm went swooping over the town, taking the chimneys with him; more than one grand old church-spire had to bend, and has never been quite right since.

There stood a sentry-box before the house of the honest old captain of the firemen — he who was always the last with his engine; the Storm grudged him that little box, and it was flung down the steps, and rolled along the street; and then — strange to say — it arose and remained standing before the house where lived the poor carpenter's apprentice who saved the lives of three persons the last time there was a fire; but the sentry-box did not mean anything by this. The barber's sign-board — a large brazen dish — was pulled down and moved straight into the councilor's window recess; and this seemed almost like malice, said all the neighbors, who, with the most intimate lady friends of the family, called the mistress "the Razor" — she was so sharp, and knew more about people than they knew themselves.

A sign-board with a rough-drawn dry stock-fish flew straight on till it stood over the door of a house where lived a man who edited a newspaper. That was a poor joke of the Storm-wind; he did not remember, I dare say, that a man who edits newspapers is not at all a person to be joked with: he is a king in his own paper and in his own opinion.

The Weathercock flew over to the roof of the opposite neighbor's house, and stayed there — in the blackest malice, the other neighbors said.

The cooper's cask got hung just under the sign for "Ladies' outfits."

The eating-house's bill of fare, which hung near the door in a heavy frame, was placed by the Storm just over the entrance to the theatre, where people never went; it was a funny bill: "Horse-radish Soup and Farced Cabbage;" but then the people came.

The furrier's fox-skin, which is his honest sign, was removed to the bell-wire of the young man who always went to the early morning service, looking like an umbrella let down, followed the truth, and was "a pattern," his aunt said.

The inscription, "Establishment for Higher Education," was removed to the billiard club; and the establishment itself got the board inscribed, "Babies brought up by hand here:" this was not at all witty — only naughty; but the Storm did it, and him we cannot control.

It was a terrible night; and — only think — in the morning almost all the sign-boards in the town were moved; and in some cases it was done with so much malice, that Grandfather would not talk about them; but he laughed inwardly — that, I well saw, and perhaps he had then some mischievous thought.

The poor folks in the large town — especially those that were strangers — were quite puzzled to know "who was who;" and it could not be otherwise when they judged according to the sign-boards. Some folks who thought they were coming into a very grave meeting of elders, assembled to discuss the most important matters, came instead into a school, full of noisy boys, nearly jumping upon the desks.

There were folks who mistook the church for the theatre; and that is indeed dreadful!

Such a Storm has never blown in our time; it is only Grandfather who lived to witness it, and then he was quite a little one; such a Storm, perhaps, never will come in our time, but in our grandchildren's; and then we must indeed hope and pray that they may keep quiet while "the Storm moves the Sign-boards."

KEPT CLOSE IS NOT FORGOTTEN.

THERE was an old house with muddy ditches round it; the drawbridge was more often up than down, for not all strange comers are welcome. Under the jutting eaves were loopholes for shooting out arrows, and heaving out boiling water — and sometimes molten lead — down upon the enemy if he came too near. Within doors the rafters stood high aloft, and left room for the smoke that went rolling up out of the huge wet logs upon the hearth. On the walls hung pictures of men in armor, and proud ladies in stiff robes; but the stateliest of them all was living here still; she was called Meta Mogens, and she was the Lady of the Manor.

At eventide there came robbers; they slew three of her men, and the watch-dog to boot, and bound Lady Meta with the dog-chain in the dog-kennel, and seated themselves in the hall above, and drank the wine out of her cellars, and all the good ale.

Lady Meta was chained up like a dog, and she could not even bark at them.

Then came the robbers' horse-boy; he stole out on tiptoe; he knew that he must not be marked, or he would die the death.

"Lady Meta Mogens," said the horse-boy, "dost thou remember in the days of thy husband how my father rode the wooden horse? Thou wouldst fain have begged him off; but there was no help for it; he was left astride on the block. But then thou stolest down, even as now I have stolen down; and thou laidst a little stone under each of his feet, that he might find some rest. None of the household saw it, or no one chose to see it; thou wert their young, their gracious lady. This my father has told me, and this have I kept close, but not forgotten. Now I set thee free — thee, Lady Meta Mogens;" and so they took steeds from the stable, and rode through wind and weather, and got help.

"That was good help for small service to the old man!" said Lady Meta Mogens.

"Kept close is not forgotten," said the horse-boy.

As for the robbers, they were hanged.

There stood an old house — it is still standing — not the house where Lady Meta Mogens dwelt; but belonging to another great and noble family.

It is in our own days. The sun shines on the gilded turret spires, wooded islets lie like nosegays on the lake, and the wild swans are swimming around them. Roses are growing in the garden; the lady of the house is herself the finest rose-leaf, shining with gladness, — the gladness of good deeds; not outwardly in the wide world, but inwardly in the hearts of men: her image is there kept close, but not forgotten.

She now goes forth from the great house to an outlying cottage in yonder field. Within it dwells a lonely woman, crippled with aches and pain. The window of her little room opens to the north; no sun comes there; and her only look-out, the patch of meadow, is bounded by a lofty dike. But to-day sunshine is there: God's beautiful warm sun is in the cottage; it comes from the south through the new window, where till now there was only wall.

The jaded cripple sits in the warm sunshine, and sees wood and water; the world has become wide and beautiful, and all at a single word from the kind lady of the manor.

"The word was so light, the service so small!" she said; "the gladness I gained was unspeakably great and blessed."

And that is why she performs so many a service, and thinks of all around her in the poor houses, and in the rich ones too — for these are not without their mourners. Her good deeds are done in secret, and kept close, but are not forgotten by our Father!

There was an old house; it was in the middle of the great bustling town. There were halls and chambers in it, but we will not enter them; we remain in the kitchen. It is snug and bright, and the things are clean and tidy. The pots and kettles shine, the table looks polished, the floor is like a fresh-

scrubbed larding-board; and all this has been done by a maid-of-all-work, who has still found time to put her own things on, as if she were going to church. There are ribbons on her cap — black ribbons — that betoken mourning. Yet she has no kith or kin to mourn for, neither father nor mother, nor yet sweetheart; she is a poor solitary serving-maid. Once indeed she was betrothed to one who was just as poor, and they loved each other dearly.

One day he came to her. "We have nothing, we two," he said; "and the rich widow in the cellar yonder has been making up to me. I shall be well off with her; but thou art in my heart. What wilt thou have me do?"

"Whatever thou thinkest best for thee!" answered the maid. "Be good and loving to her; but remember that from the hour we part, we two must never meet again."

A few years had gone by, when she met him in the street, her former friend and sweetheart. He looked sickly and miserable. Then she could not hold back, she was forced to ask him, "How art thou getting on?"

"Right well, in every way!" said he. "My wife is honest and true, but thou art in my heart. I have fought my fight; it will soon be over. We meet for the last time now, till our Father calls us."

A week had passed. Yesterday's paper told that he was dead; that is why the maid wears mourning. Her sweetheart has left a widow and three step-children, the paper said; that rings badly, yet the metal is pure.

The black ribbons betoken mourning; the maid's face betokens it still more; it is kept close in her heart, and it will never be forgotten.

See, there are three stories; three blades upon one stalk. Do you wish for more such clover blades? There are many in the book of the heart, kept close, but not forgotten.

THE PORTER'S SON.

THE General's family lived on the drawing-room floor, the Porter's lived in the cellar. There was a great distance between the two families — the whole ground-floor and the grades of society ; but both lived under the same roof, and their windows looked out upon the street and the same yard. In this yard there was a blooming acacia — whenever it did bloom ; and the smart nurse used to sit under it with the still smarter child, the General's "Little Emily." The Porter's little boy, with his large brown eyes and dark hair, used to dance bare-legged before them ; and the child would laugh at him, and stretch her tiny hands to him ; and if the General saw this from his window, he would nod down at them, and say, "*Charmant!*" The General's lady, who was so young that she might almost have been her husband's daughter by an early marriage, never herself looked out of the window into the yard ; but she had given orders that the cellar-people's boy might play about near her own child, but never touch it. The nurse kept strictly to her ladyship's orders.

And the sun shone in upon those on the drawing-room floor, and upon those in the cellar. The acacia put forth its blossoms ; they fell off, and new ones came again next year. The tree bloomed, and the Porter's little boy bloomed ; he looked quite like a fresh tulip.

The General's little daughter grew a delicate child, like the faint rosy leaf of the acacia blossom. She seldom came now under the tree ; the fresh air she took in a carriage. She went with mamma for her drives, and she always nodded to the Porter's George ; aye, and kissed her fingers at him, till her mother told her that she was now grown too big for that.

One forenoon he had to go up to the General's floor with the letters and newspapers which had been left at the Porter's lodge in the morning. When he had mounted the staircase,

and was passing the door of the sand-bin, he heard something wailing inside it. He thought it was a stray chicken chirping to get out; and lo! it was the General's little daughter in muslin and lace!

"Don't tell papa and mamma; they will be so angry!"

"What is the matter, little lady?" asked George.

"It's burning all over!" said she; "it's burning and blazing!"

George opened the door to the little nursery; the window-curtain was nearly burned: the curtain-rod had caught fire, and stood in flames. George sprang up, pulled it down, and called for help; without him there would have been a house on fire.

The General and her ladyship examined little Emily.

"I only just took one match," said she, "and that lighted up, and then the curtain lighted up. I spit all I could, but it was no good, and so I came out and hid myself, for papa and mamma would be so angry."

"Spit!" said the General; "what sort of word is that? When did you ever hear papa or mamma talk of spitting? That you have learned down-stairs."

But little George got a penny-piece. It did not go to the bun-shop, but into the savings-box; and there were soon so many half-pence that he could buy himself a paint-box, and put color to his drawings; and of these he had many: they seemed to come out of his pencil and his finger-ends. The first colored pictures were presented to little Emily.

"*Charmant!*" said the General. Her ladyship herself admitted that one could see clearly enough what the little one meant in his pictures. "There's genius in him!"

Such were the words which the Porter's wife brought down into the cellar.

The General and his lady were people of rank: they had two armorial shields on their carriage, one for each of them. Her ladyship had arms worked on every bit of clothing inside and out, on her nightcap, and on her night-bag. This, her own shield, was a costly one, bought by her father for shining dollars; for he had not been born with it, no, nor she either; she had come into the world prematurely, seven years before

the shield of arms ; a fact that was remembered by most people, though not by the family. The General's shield was old and large ; one's back might well creak with the dignity of this alone, to say nothing of two shields ; and there was a creaking in the back of her ladyship, when stiff and stately she drove to the court-ball.

The General was old and gray, but sat well on horseback ; he was quite aware of it, and rode out every day, with a groom at a respectful distance behind him. When he came to a party, it was just as if he came riding in on his high horse, and he wore orders enough to bewilder one ; but that was not by any means *his* fault. As a very young man he had performed military duties, by taking a part in the great autumnal reviews, which used to be held in the piping days of peace. Of that time he had an anecdote to tell, the only one he had. His subaltern cut off and took prisoner one of the princes ; and the Prince with his little troop of soldiers, prisoners like himself, had to ride back to town behind the General. It was an event never to be forgotten, and the General told and retold it, year after year, always ending with the remarkable words which he had spoken when he returned the Prince's sabre to him : "Only my subaltern could have made your Royal Highness a prisoner, I myself — never ! " and the Prince had answered : "Monsieur, you are incomparable ! "

In active service the General had never been ; for when the war went through his native land, he went on the diplomatic road, through three foreign countries. He talked the French language till he almost forgot his own ; he danced well, he rode well, orders grew on his coat in indescribable profusion, the sentinels presented arms to him, one of the prettiest of girls presented herself to him — and she became the General's lady ; and they had a pretty babe that seemed to have fallen from the sky, it was so pretty ; and the Porter's son danced in the yard before it as soon as it could take notice, and gave it all his colored drawings ; and it looked at them, and was delighted with them, and tore them to pieces. She was such a dear sweet little thing !

"My rose-leaf ! " said the General's lady, "thou art born to be a prince's bride ! "

The Prince was already standing outside the door, though nobody knew of it. People cannot see much further than the doorstep.

"T'other day our George shared his bread and butter with her, that he did!" said the Porter's wife. "There was no cheese, nor yet meat with it; yet she relished it every bit as well as roast beef. There'd have been a fine to-do if some folks had seen the little feast; but they didn't see it."

George had shared bread and butter with little Emily; gladly would he have shared his heart with her. He was a a good boy, clever and sprightly; and he now went to the evening school at the Academy in order to learn drawing thoroughly. Little Emily, too, made some progress in learning: she talked French with her "Bonne," and had a dancing-master.

"George is to be confirmed at Easter," said the Porter's wife. So far advanced now was George.

"It wouldn't be amiss either to have him 'prenticed," said the father, "to something tidy, of course; and so we shall get him out in the world."

"He would come home, though, to sleep at nights," said the mother. "It wouldn't be easy to find a master with a spare room. Clothes, too, we should have to give him: the bit of food he now eats is easily come at, he can make himself happy with a couple of baked potatoes; and he has his teaching free. Just let him go his own way, and he'll turn out a blessing to us, you may be sure! Didn't the Professor say so?"

The confirmation clothes were ready. Mother herself did the sewing, but they had been cut out by the jobber, and he knew how to cut them: if he'd only been better placed, and could have opened a shop and taken 'prentices, said the Porter's wife, the man might have become court-tailor.

The clothes were ready, and the candidate was ready. On the confirmation day George received a great pinchbeck watch from his godfather, the flax-dealer's old shopman, the richest of George's godfathers. The watch was old and well-tried: it always went too fast, but that is better than going too slow. This was a splendid present; and from the General's came a

hymn-book bound in morocco, sent by the little lady to whom George had presented his pictures. On the fly-leaf stood his name and her name, and "his gracious well-wisher." This was written after the dictation of the General's lady, and the General had read it through, and said, "*Charmant!*"

"That was really a great attention from such grand gentlefolk," said the Porter's wife; and George had to go up-stairs in his confirmation clothes, and with his hymn-book, to show himself and return thanks.

Her ladyship sat in a number of wrappings? and she had one of her bad headaches, which always came when she felt *ennui*. She looked kindly at George, and wished him everything that was good, and none of her headache. The General was in his dressing-gown, and wore a tasseled cap, and boots with tops of red russia. He paced up and down the floor three times, in thoughts and remembrances of his own, stopped still, and said, —

"Little George, then, is now a Christian man! Let him be likewise an honest man, and pay due respect to his superiors! This sentence, some day, when you are old, you can say that the General taught you."

This was a longer speech than the General was accustomed to make; and he fell back into meditation, and looked imposing. But of all that George heard or saw up there, nothing remained fixed in his memory so clearly as little Miss Emily. How winning she looked, how soft, how fluttering, how fragile! If her portrait was to be painted, it must be in a soap-bubble. There was a fragrance about her clothes and her curly yellow hair as if she were a fresh-blossomed rose-tree. And with her he had once shared bread and butter; and she had eaten it with a sharp appetite, and nodded to him at every mouthful. Could she possibly recollect it still? Surely yes; it was "in remembrance" of this that she had given him the handsome hymn-book. And so, next year, as soon as the New Year's new moon was shining, he went out of doors with a loaf and a shilling in his hand, and opened the book to see what hymn he should turn up. It was a hymn of praise and thanksgiving. And he opened it again to see what would turn up for little Emily. He was mightily careful

not to dip into one part of the book — the place of the funeral hymns; and yet, for all his care, he *did* dip in between death and the grave. This was not the sort of thing to believe in; not a bit of it! and yet frightened he was, when soon afterwards the dainty little girl was laid up in bed, and when the hall door was visited daily by the doctor's carriage.

"They'll not keep her," said the Porter's wife; "our Lord knows right well whom He will take to himself."

But they did keep her, and George drew pictures to send her. He drew the castle of the Czar, the old Kremlin at Moscow, exactly as it stood, with turrets and cupolas: they looked like gigantic green and gilt cucumbers — at least, they looked so in George's drawing. It pleased little Emily so much, that in the course of the week George sent some more pictures, all of them buildings; for then she would have plenty to think about, wondering what was inside the door and the windows.

He drew a Chinese house, with bells hanging to all the sixteen storys. He drew two Greek temples, with slender marble pillars and steps round them. He drew a Norwegian church; one could see it was entirely built of timbers, deeply carved and quaintly set up; every story looked as if it had cradle-rockers. But most beautiful of all was one design, a castle, which he called "Little Emily's." This was to be her dwelling-place, and so George had imagined it all himself, and picked out for it whatever seemed prettiest in each of the other buildings. It had carved beams, like the Norwegian church; marble pillars, like the Greek temples; a peal of bells on every story; and at the top of all, cupolas, green and gilded, like those upon the Kremlin of the Czar. It was a true child's palace! And under every window was written what the hall or chamber was intended for: "Here Emily sleeps:" "Here Emily dances:" and "Here she is to play at 'visitors coming.'" It was amusing to look at, and looked at it was, you may be sure.

"*Charmant!*" said the General.

But the old Count — for there was an old Count, who was even grander than the General, and had a castle and mansion of his own — said nothing. He had been told that this had been imagined and drawn by the Porter's little son. Not that

the boy was so very little now; indeed, he was confirmed. The old Count looked at the pictures, and had his own quiet thoughts about them.

One morning, when the weather was downright gray, damp and dismal, it proved one of the brightest and best of days for little George. The Professor at the Art Academy called him into his private room.

"Listen, my lad," said he; "let us have a little talk together. Our Lord has favored you with good abilities; he is now favoring you with good friends. The old Count at the corner house has spoken to me about you. I have seen your pictures also; between ourselves, we may cross them out, they require so much correction. But henceforward you may come twice a week to my drawing-school, and so learn in time to do better. I believe there is more stuff in you to make an architect than a painter. This you will have time to consider; but go up at once to the old Count at the corner house, and give thanks to our Lord for such a friend.

It was a fine mansion, that corner house: round the windows were carved figures, both elephants and dromedaries, all of the olden time; but the old Count was fondest of the modern time, and whatever good it brought, whether out of drawing-room, or the cellar, or the garret.

"I do think," said the Porter's wife, "that the more folks are really grand, the less they are stuck up. You should see the old Count, ever so sweet and affable! and he can talk, bless you, just like you and me — you won't find that at the General's. There was George yesterday, clean upside down with delight, the Count treated him so graciously; and I am much the same to-day, after getting a talk with the great man. Wasn't it lucky now, that we didn't 'prentice George to a trade? The boy has good parts in him."

"But they must have help from outside," said the father.

"Well, and now he has got help," said the mother. "The Count spoke out, plain and straightforward, that he did."

"It was at the General's though, that it was all set going," said the father: "they must have their turn of thanks, too."

"They may have it, and welcome," said the mother; "yet there's not overmuch to thank them for, I reckon. I'll thank

our Lord above all, and thank Him all the more, now that little Emily is coming round again."

Emily kept getting on, and George kept getting on; in the course of the year he won, first the small silver medal, and then the great one.

"It would have been better, after all, to have 'prenticed him!" said the Porter's wife, in tears; "we should have kept him here, then. What does he want in Rome? Never more shall I set eyes on him, even if he ever comes home again; and that he won't do, poor dear child!"

"But it 's for his own good and glory," said the father.

"Ah! it 's all very fine talking, good-man," said the mother, "but you don't mean what you say. You are just as down-hearted as I am."

And it was all true, both as to the grief and the going away. It was a grand piece of luck for the young man, said the neighbors.

And there was a round of leave-taking, including the General's. Her ladyship did not appear; she had her bad head-ache. The General at parting related his only anecdote — what he had said to the Prince, and how the Prince had said to him, "Monsieur, you are incomparable!" and then he gave George his hand, — his slack old hand.

Emily, too, gave George her hand, and looked almost dismal; but there was no one so dismal as George.

Time goes on. Whether one is busy or idle, Time is equally long, though not equally profitable. To George it was profitable, and never seemed long, except when he thought of those at home: how were they getting on, up-stairs and down-stairs? Well, tidings were sent of them: and so much may be wrapped up in a letter — both the bright sunshine and the gloomy shade. The shade of death lay in the letter, that told him his mother was left a lonesome widow. Emily had been an angel of comfort: "she had come down below, she had," wrote mother. As for herself, she added, she had got leave to take father's post at the Porter's lodge.

The General's lady kept a diary: every ball was entered in

it, every party she had been to, and every visit she had received. The volume was illustrated with cards of diplomatists, and other grandees. She was proud of her diary; it increased in growth, season after season, during many great headaches, but also during many bright nights — that is to say, court-balls.

Emily had now been to her first court-ball. The mother was in pink, with black lace — Spanish; the daughter was in white, so clear, so fine! green ribbons fluttered, like bulrush-leaves, in her curly yellow locks, and she was crowned with a wreath of white water-lilies. With her sparkling blue eyes, and soft, rosy lips, she resembled a little mermaid, as beautiful as one could imagine. Three princes danced with her, one after another. Her ladyship had no headache for a whole week.

But the first ball was not the last. It was getting too much for Emily; and so it was well that summer came, with rest and change of air. The family was invited to the castle of the old Count.

This castle had a garden worth seeing. One part of it was quite in the old style, with stiff, green alleys, where one seemed to be walking between tall green screens, pierced with peeping-holes; box-trees and yew-trees stood clipped into stars and pyramids; water sprang from great grottoes, set with cockle-shells; stone figures stood all round about, of the very heaviest stone, as one could plainly perceive by the faces and draperies; every flower-bed had its own device — such as a fish, a heraldic shield, or a monogram: this was the French part of the garden. From this part one came out, as it were, into the fresh wild-wood, where the trees could grow as they pleased, and were therefore great and splendid. There was a green turf, inviting one's feet to tread on it, well-mown, well rolled, and well-kept altogether. This was the English part of the garden.

"Olden times and modern times!" said the Count: "here they meet with loving embraces. In about two years the house itself will assume its proper importance. It will undergo a perfect change into something handsomer and better. I will show you the plans, and I will show you the architect he is coming here to dinner."

"*Charmant!*" said the general.

"This garden is paradisiacal!" said her ladyship; "and yonder you have a baronial castle."

That is my hen-house," said the Count; "the pigeons live in the tower, the turkeys on the first floor, but in the parlor reigns old Dame Else. She has spare rooms on all sides; this for the sitting hen, that for the hen and chickens, while the ducks have their own outlet to the water."

"*Charmant!*" repeated the General, and they all went to see the fine show.

Old Else stood in the middle of the parlor, and beside her stood the architect — George! He and little Emily met — after so many years — met in the hen-house.

Aye, there he stood a comely figure to look at: his countenance open and determined, his hair black and glossy, and his mouth with a smile that said, "There is a little rogue behind my ear, that knows you outside and inside!" Old Else had taken off her wooden shoes and stood in her stockings, out of respect for her illustrious visitors. The hens clucked, the cock crowed, and the ducks waddled along, rap, rap. But the pale slender girl, the friend of his childhood, the General's daughter, stood before him; her pale cheeks flushing with the rose, her eyes opening eagerly, and her mouth speaking without uttering a syllable. Such was the greeting he received; the prettiest that any young man could desire from a young lady; unless, indeed, they were of the same family, or had often danced together; but these two had never danced together.

The Count grasped his hand and presented him, saying, "Not a complete stranger, our young friend, Mr. George."

Her ladyship courtesied; her daughter was about to give him her hand, but she did not give it him.

"Our little Mr. George!" said the General. "Old house-friends: *charmant!*"

"You have grown quite an Italian," said her ladyship; "and you speak the language, no doubt, like a native."

Her ladyship could sing Italian, but not speak it, added the General.

At the dinner-table George sat at the right hand of Emily.

The General had led her in; and the Count had led in her ladyship.

George talked, and told anecdotes, and he could tell them well. He was the life and soul of the party; though the old Count could have been so too, if it had suited him. Emily sat silent; her ears listened, her eyes shone, but she said nothing.

They stood, she and George, among the flowers in the veranda behind a screen of roses. It was left to George again to begin speaking.

"Thanks for your kindness to my mother," said he; "I know that, on the night of my father's death, you went down and stayed with her, till his eyes were closed. Thanks!" He raised Emily's hand, and kissed it; he might fairly do so on that occasion. She grew blushing red; but pressed his hand in return, and looked at him with her tender blue eyes.

"Your mother was a loving soul; how fond she was of you! All your letters she brought me to read, so I seem almost to know you. I remember too when I was little, how kind you were to me. You gave me pictures" —

"Which you tore in pieces," said George.

"Nay, I have still my own castle left — that drawing of it."

"And now I must build it in reality!" said George, and grew quite hot himself as he said it.

The General and his lady, in their own rooms, talked about the Porter's son. Why, he could express himself with knowledge, with refinement! "He is fit to be engaged as a tutor," said the General.

"Genius!" said her ladyship; and that was all she said.

Again and again, in those fine summer days, did George come to the castle of the Count. He was missed when he did not come.

"How much more God has given to you than to us ordinary mortals!" said Emily to him. "Are you grateful for that now?"

It flattered George, that this fair young girl should look up to him, and he thought she had rare powers of appreciation.

And the General felt more and more convinced that Mr. George could hardly be a genuine child of the cellar. "Otherwise, the mother was a right honest woman," said he; "that sentence I owe to her epitaph!"

Summer went; winter came; and there was more to tell about Mr. George. He had received notice and favor in the highest of high places. The General had met him at the court-ball.

And now there was to be a ball at home, for little Emily. Could Mr. George be invited?

"Whom the King invites, the General can invite!" said the General, and drew himself up a good inch higher.

Mr. George was invited, and he came. And princes and counts came, and each danced better than the other. But Emily danced only the first dance, for in the course of it she sprained her ankle, not dangerously, but enough to give her pain; and so she had to be prudent, and stop dancing, and look on at the others. And there she sat, looking on, while the architect stood by her side.

"You are giving her the whole of St. Peter's at Rome," said the General, as he passed, smiling like benevolence itself.

With the same smile of benevolence he received Mr. George a few days afterward. The young man came to thank him for the ball, of course. Was there anything else to say? Yes, indeed, astounding — amazing — raving madness, that was all! The General could scarcely believe his own ears. A "pyramidal declamation!" an unheard-of proposition! Mr. George asked for little Emily as his wife!

"Man!" said the General, and he began to boil, "I cannot understand you! What is it you say? What is it you want? I don't know you. Sir! Fellow! you choose to come and break into my house! am I to stay here, or am I not?" And he backed out into his bedroom, and locked the door. George stood alone for a few moments, and then turned on his heel. In the corridor he met Emily.

"My father answered?" — she asked, with a trembling voice.

George pressed her hand. "He ran away from me — a better time will come."

There were tears in Emily's eyes: in those of the young man were courage and confidence; and the sun shone in upon them both and blessed them.

In his bedroom sat the General, boiling more and more;

boiling over, and sputtering out "Lunacy! Porter-madness!"

Before an hour was past, the General's lady learned it all from the General's own mouth, and she called for Emily, and sat alone with her.

"Poor girl," she said; "to think of his insulting you so, insulting us all! You have tears in your eyes, I see: they are quite becoming to you. You look charming in tears. You remind me of myself on my wedding-day. Go on crying, little Emily."

"That I must, indeed!" said Emily, "unless you and papa say 'Yes!'"

"Child," cried her ladyship, "you are ill! you are delirious! and I am getting my dreadful headache! O, the miseries that are coming down upon our house! Do not let your mother die, Emily; then you will have no mother."

And her ladyship's eyes were wet: she could not bear to think of her own death.

Among other announcements in the "Gazette" might be seen: "Mr. George, appointed Professor, 5th class, No. 8."

"What a pity his father and mother are in the grave, and can't read it!" said the new porter folks, who now lived in the cellar under the General. They knew that the Professor had been born and bred within the four walls.

"Now he'll come in for the title-tax!" said the man.

"Well, it 's no such mighty matter for a poor child!" said the wife.

"Eighteen rix-dollars a year!" said the man. "*I* call it a good round sum."

"No, no; it 's the title *I*'m talking of!" said the wife. "You don't suppose he'll be bothered by having the tax to pay? He can earn as much over and over again, and a rich wife into the bargain. If we had little ones, good-man, a child of ours, too, would some day be architect and professor."

Thus George was well mentioned in the cellar, and he was well mentioned on the drawing-room floor: the old Count took good care of that.

It was the old set of childish picture-drawings that intro

duced his name. But how came these to be mentioned? Why, the talk turned upon Russia, upon Moscow: and thus one was led right up to the Kremlin, of which our friend George made a drawing once, when he was little, for the little Miss Emily. What a number of pictures he used to draw! one the Count especially remembered — "Little Emily's Castle," with scrolls showing where she slept, where she danced, and where she played at "Visitors coming." The Professor had great ability. He might live to be an old veteran privy counselor — that was not at all improbable: aye, and build a real castle for the young lady before he died — why not?

"That was a strange burst of vivacity," remarked the General's lady, when the Count was gone. The General nodded his head, thoughtfully, and went out riding, with his groom at a respectful distance behind him, and he sat prouder than ever on his high horse.

Little Emily's birthday came, bringing cards and notes, books and flowers. The General kissed her on the brow, and her ladyship kissed her on the lips. They were patterns of parental affection; and they were all three honored with high visitors — two of the princes. Then there was talk about balls and theatres, about diplomatic embassies, and the government of kingdoms and empires. There was talk about rising men, about native talent; and this brought up the name of the young professor, Mr. George, the architect.

"He is building for immortality!" it was said; "meanwhile he is building himself into one of the first families."

"One of the first families!" repeated the General, when he was left alone with her ladyship: "which one of our first families?"

"I can guess which was alluded to," said her ladyship; "but I don't choose to speak, nor even think of it. God may ordain it so, but I shall be quite astounded!"

"Astounded!" echoed the General. "Look at me; I haven't a single idea in my head!" and he sank into a reverie, waiting for thoughts to come.

There is an unspeakable power bestowed on a man by a few dew-drops of grace — grace from above — whether the grace of kings, or the grace of God; and both of these combined in favor of little George.

But we are forgetting the birthday.

Emily's chamber was fragrant with flowers, sent by her friends and playmates: on her table lay fine presents, tokens of greeting and remembrance; but not one from George. Gifts from him would not have reached her, but they were not needed; the whole house was a remembrance of him. From the very sand-bin under the stairs peeped a memorial flower, even as Emily had peeped, when the curtain was in flames, and George rushed up as first fireman. One glance out of the window, and the acacia-tree reminded her of the days of childhood. Blossoms and leaves were gone, but the tree stood in hoar-frost, like a vast branch of coral; and full and clear between the branches shone the moon, unchanged though ever changing, the same as when boy George shared his bread and butter with baby Emily.

She opened a drawer and took out the pictures, — the Kremlin of the Czar, and her own castle, — keepsakes from George. They were looked on and mused upon, and thought after thought kept rising. She remembered the day when, unmarked by father or mother, she stole down to where the Porter's wife lay breathing her last; she sat by her side, held her hand, and heard her dying words, "Blessing — George!" The mother was thinking of her son. But now, to Emily, the words seemed to bear a deeper meaning. In good truth, George was with her on her birthday.

The next day, as it happened, was another birthday, the General's own, for he had been born the day after his daughter — naturally earlier, many years earlier. Again there came presents; and among the rest a saddle of a peculiar make, and comfortable and costly; there was only one of the princes who had the fellow to it. From whom could it have come? The General was in ecstasy. It bore a little ticket. Now, if this had said, "Thanks for yesterday," any of us could have guessed whom it came from, but the ticket said, "From one whom the General does not know."

"Who in the world is there I do not know?" said the General. "I know everybody," and his thoughts went paying visits in the great world. He knew them all there, one and all. "It comes from my wife!" he said, at last. "She is making fun of me! *Charmant!*"

But she was not making fun of him; that time was gone by.

Once more there was a feast; but not at the General's. It was a fancy ball given by one of the princes: masking was allowed there.

The General went as Rubens, in a Spanish dress with a small ruff, upright as his rapier. Her ladyship was Madame Rubens, in black velvet, a high bodice, terribly warm, and her neck in a millstone, that is to say, in a large ruff. She looked the image of a Dutch painting of the General's, the hands in which were especially admired, and were thought exactly like those of her ladyship.

Emily was Psyche, in muslin and lace. She was a floating tuft of swan's-down; she was in no need of wings, and only wore them as the Psyche badge.

It was a scene of pomp and splendor, lights and flowers, magnificence and taste. One had hardly time to pay attention to Madame Rubens and her beautiful hands.

A black Domino, with an acacia flower in his hood, danced with Psyche.

"Who is he?" asked the General's lady.

"His Royal Highness," said the General. "I am quite sure of that. I knew him at once by his hand-salute."

Her ladyship doubted.

General Rubens did not doubt. He drew near the black Domino, and wrote royal initials on the palm of his hand. They were not acknowledged; but a certain hint was given in return: the motto of the saddle! — "One whom the General does not know!"

"Yet something I do know of you," said the General; "it was you who sent me the saddle."

The Domino waved his hand, and disappeared among the others.

"Who is the black Domino you have been dancing with, Emily?" asked her mother.

"I did not ask his name," she answered.

"Because you knew it! It is the Professor. Your protégé, Count, is there," she continued, turning to the Count, who stood close by; "the black Domino with the acacia flower."

"Very likely, your ladyship," he replied; "but still, there is one of the princes in the same costume."

"I know that hand-salute," said the General. "From the Prince I received the saddle! I feel so sure of my man, that I would ask him to dinner."

"Do so," said the Count; "if it 's the Prince he will be sure to come."

"And if it is the other he will not come," said the General; and made his way to the black Domino, who stood talking with the King. The General offered him a most respectful invitation, together with hopes of better acquaintance. The General smiled in full confidence, he knew so well whom he was inviting, and he spoke aloud and distinctly.

The Domino lifted his mask; it was George!

"Does the General repeat his invitation?" he asked.

The General drew himself an inch higher, assumed a stiffer bearing, took two steps backward, and one step forward, as if dancing a minuet; and all the gravity and expression he could muster — *all the General*, in short — stood in his fine features.

"I never retract my offers — the Professor is invited!" and he bowed, with a sidelong glance at the King, who might certainly have heard the whole of it.

And thus the General gave a dinner, at which his only guests were the old Count and his protégé.

"My foot under the table!" thought George; "the foundation-stone is laid." And so it was indeed; and it was laid with great solemnity on the part of the General and her ladyship.

The man had come and gone; and, as the General was quite ready to confess, had behaved like a member of good society, and had been vastly agreeable; the General had often found himself repeating his "*Charmant.*" Her ladyship also talked of her dinner; talked of it to one of the highest and most highly gifted of the court ladies, and the latter begged an invitation for herself, next time the Professor came. So he must needs be re-invited. And invited he was, and came, and again he was "*Charmant;* he could even play at chess!

"He is not from the cellar," said the General. "Most undoubtedly he is some scion of nobility — there are many such noble scions — and that is not any fault of the young man's!"

Mr. Professor could enter the King's house, and so might very well enter the General's; but strike root there — no! Who could talk of such a thing? — Why, the whole town, that was all.

He did strike root, and he grew. The dew of grace fell from above.

There was nobody, therefore, astonished that, when the Professor became State Counselor, Emily became *State Counseloress*. "Life is tragedy or comedy," said the General: "in tragedy they die; in comedy they win each other."

Here they won each other. And they won three sturdy boys, though not all at once.

The sweet children rode on sticks from room to room, whenever they came to see grandfather and grandmother. And the General rode on a stick behind them, "as groom for the small State Counselors!"

Her ladyship sat on the sofa and smiled, even if she had got her bad headache.

So far did George get on in the world, and much farther too; or else it would not have been worth my while to tell the story of "The Porter's Son."

AUNTY.

YOU should have known Aunty. She was so charming. Yes; that is to say, not at all charming in the usual sense of charming, but sweet and quaint, and funny in her own way; just the thing, in short, to chat about, when one feels in the mood for gossiping and laughing. She was fit to be put in a play; and that simply and solely because she herself lived for the play-house, and all that goes on in it. She was far above any scandal; and even Commercial Agent Bigg (or Pig, as Aunty called him) could only say she was play-house mad.

"The theatre is my school-room," said she; "my fountain of knowledge. There I have rubbed up my old Bible history; take "Moses," for instance, or "Joseph and his Brethren;" they are operas now. It is there that I have studied my General History, my Geography, and foreign Manners and Customs. From French pieces I have learned Paris life — rather naughty, but highly interesting. How I have cried over the "Riguebourg Family;" to think that the husband must drink himself to death, and all to let his wife get her young sweetheart. Aye, many and many's the tear I've shed, all those fifty years of play-going."

Aunty knew every piece, every bit of scenery, every actor that came on, or ever had come on. She could hardly be said to live, except in the nine theatrical months. A summer without a summer spectacle was enough to age her; while a play-night that lasted till morning was a prolongation of life. She did not say like other people, "We shall soon have spring: the stork is come!" or "There is news in the paper of the early strawberries!" No; the autumn was what she announced, thus: "Have you seen the Box-office is open; They'll soon begin the performances."

She reckoned the worth of a house and its situation by its

distance from the theatre. It was grief to her to leave the narrow court behind the theatre, and flit to the wide street a little further off, and live there without any opposite neighbors.

"At home my windows should be my theatre-box. One can't sit there in the dumps, never seeing a soul. But where I live now I seem to be clean out in the country; not a living creature in sight unless I go into the back kitchen, and clamber up on the sink; that's the only way of getting at my neighbors. Now, in that old court of mine, I could look right into the flax-dealer's; and then I had only three hundred steps to take to the theatre; now it takes me three thousand steps, and life-guardsman steps too."

Aunty might sometimes be out of sorts; but, well or ill, she never neglected the theatre. Her doctor ordered her, one evening, to put her feet in poultices; she did as he told her; but rode off to the theatre, and sat there with her feet in poultices. If she had died there, she would have been contented. Thorwaldsen died in the theatre; this she called "a blessed death."

She could not form any notion of heaven if there was to be no theatre there. It was not exactly promised us: but only think of all the great actors and actresses who had gone before; surely they must find some fresh scene of action.

Aunty had her own electric wire from the theatre to her room; the telegram came every Sunday to coffee. Her electric wire was "Mr. Sivertsen of the stage-machinery department." It was he who gave the signals for up or down, on or off, with the curtain and scenery.

From him she received a brief and business-like report of the coming pieces. Shakespeare's "Tempest" he called "wretched stuff! there is so much to set up! why, it begins with water to back-scene No. 1." That was to say, that so far backward stretched the rolling billows. On the other hand, if a piece could get through five acts without a single change of decorations, he pronounced it sensible and well-constructed; a steady-going piece that could play itself, without any pushing or pulling.

Aunty used to talk about "a goodish time back," meaning some thirty and odd years, when she and Mr. Sivertsen were

both younger ; how he was then already in the machinery department, and how he became her "benefactor." In those days it was the custom, at the great and only theatre of the town, to admit spectators into the cockloft ; every carpenter could dispose of one or two places. It was soon chock-full ; and the company was very select ; the wives of generals and aldermen had been there, it was said ; it was so interesting to look down behind the scenes, and observe how the performers stood and moved, when the curtain was down.

Aunty had many times been there ; especially to tragedies and ballets : for the pieces that required the largest *personale* were the most interesting to see from the cockloft. One sat up there in darkness pretty nearly. Most people brought their suppers with them. Once three apples, a slice of bread and butter, and a sausage-roll, came straight down into the prison where *Ugolino* and his sons were just about to die of hunger. This sausage-roll produced a great effect. It was cheered by the public ; but it determined the managing committee to shut up the cockloft.

"But still, I have been there seven-and-thirty times," said Aunty ; "and that I shall always remember of Mr. Sivertsen."

On the very last evening that the cockloft was open to the public, the "Judgment of Solomon" was played ; Aunty could remember it so well. From her benefactor, Mr. Sivertsen, she had obtained a ticket for Agent Bigg. Not that he deserved one ; he was always flouting and fleering at the theatre, and quizzing her about it ; still she did get him a place in the cockloft. He wanted to look at the play-house articles wrong side uppermost : "these were his very words, and just like him," said Aunty.

So he saw the "Judgment of Solomon" from above, and fell asleep. It was easy to guess that he had been dining out and joining in several toasts. He slept till he was locked in, and sat the whole dark night in the theatre loft. He had a story to tell of his waking up ; but Aunty did not believe a bit of it. The play was played out, the lamps and lights were all out, all the people were out, above and beneath ; but then began the after-piece, the genuine comedy, the best of all, said the agent. There came life into the properties ; it was not "Solo-

mon's Judgment" that was given now, but "Judgment Day at the Theatre." And all this did Agent Bigg, in his impudence, try to cram into Aunty; that was her thanks for getting him into the cockloft.

What the agent went on to tell might be comical enough, but there was mockery and spite at the bottom of it.

"It was dark up there," said the agent; "but then began the demon-show, the grand spectacle, 'Judgment Day at the Theatre.' Check-takers stood at the doors, and every spectator had to show his spiritual testimonial, to settle whether he was to enter free-handed or handcuffed, and with or without a gag in his mouth. Fine gentlefolk, who came too late, when the performance had already begun, and young fellows given to losing their time, were tethered outside. There they were shod with felt, so as to creep in gently before the next act, besides being gagged. And so began 'Judgment Day at the Theatre.'"

"Mere spite," said Aunty; "which our Lord knows nothing of."

The scene-painter, if he wished to get into heaven, had to clamber up some stairs which he had painted himself, but which were too high for the longest pair of legs. That, to be sure, was only a sin against perspective. All the trees, flowers, and buildings, which the machinist had taken such pains to plant in lands quite foreign to them, the poor wretch had to transplant into their proper homes, and all before cockcrow, if he looked for any chance of heaven. Mr. Bigg had better mind his own chances of getting there! And then to hear what he told of the performers, both in tragedy and comedy, in song and in dance — why, it was shameful of Mr. Bigg! Mr. *Pig* indeed! he never deserved his place in the cockloft. Aunty would not believe him on his oath. It was all written out, he said; and he swore (the pig!) it should be printed when he was dead and buried — not before, he had no wish to be flayed alive.

Aunty had once been in terror and anguish in her own temple of happiness, the theatre. It was a winter day; one of those days when we have just two hours of foggy daylight. It was bleak and snowy; but Aunty was bound for the theatre.

They were to give "Hermann von Unna" besides a little opera and a great ballet, a prologue and an epilogue: it would last over the night. Aunty must needs be off: her lodger had lent her a pair of sledging-boots, shaggy both outside and inside; they reached the whole way up the legs.

She came to the theatre and into her box; the boots were warm, so she kept them on. Suddenly there arose a cry of "Fire!" smoke came from one of the wings, smoke came from the cockloft; there was a frightful uproar. People stormed out. Aunty sat furthest from the door. "Second tier, left-hand side; the decorations tell best there," she used to say; "they are always arranged to look prettiest from the king's side of the house." Aunty now wished to get out of it, but those before her, in their blundering excitement, slammed the door fast. There stood Aunty; there was no way out, and no way in, for the next box had too high a partition. She called; nobody heard her. She looked over at the tier underneath; it was empty; the balustrade was low; there was not far to drop. In her fright she felt young and active. She prepared for a jump. She got one foot on the bench, the other over the balustrade; and there she sat astride, well draped in her flowered skirt, with a long leg dangling below it, displaying an enormous sledging-boot. That was a sight to see! Seen it was, and Aunty heard at last; and she was easily saved, for there was no fire to speak of.

That was the most memorable evening in her life, she used to say; and she thanked Heaven she did not see herself, or she would have died of shame.

Her benefactor in the machinery department, Mr. Sivertsen, came to her regularly every Sunday. But it was a long time from Sunday to Sunday. Latterly, therefore, in the middle of the week, a small child came up for "the leavings;" that is to say, to make a supper off the remains of Aunty's dinner.

This child was a young member of the ballet, only too happy to get a meal. She used to tread the boards as a page or a fairy. Her hardest part was that of hind-legs for the lion in Mozart's "Enchanted Flute." She grew up in time to be fore-legs; for this she was only paid three marks, though she had been paid a rix-dollar when she was hind-legs; but then she

had had to creep about stooping, and panting for want of fresh air. This was very interesting to know, observed Aunty.

If every one got his deserts, Aunty would have lasted as long as the theatre. But she could not hold out so long. Neither did she die in it, but quietly and decently in her own bed. Meanwhile her dying words were full of meaning; she asked, "What are they going to play to-morrow?"

She left behind her about five hundred rix-dollars — so at least we conclude from the yearly rental, which amounts to twenty dollars. The money was left as a legacy to some one or other deserving old spinster, living alone in the world. It was to be used for taking a place on the second tier, left side, every Saturday; for on that day they gave the best pieces. Only one condition was imposed on the legatee. As she sat in the theatre, every Saturday, she was to think of Aunty who lay in her grave.

This was Aunty's Religious Foundation.

CHICKEN-GRETHE'S FAMILY.

CHICKEN-GRETHE was the only human being that lived in the new and stately house that had just been built for the chickens and ducks in the farm-yard; it was erected where formerly the old baronial castle had stood, with its turrets, pointed gable, moat, and draw-bridge. All around was a perfect wilderness of trees and shrubs; this had been the garden, which once extended down to the big lake; that is now all a marsh. Rooks, crows, and jackdaws soared above these trees with noisy clamor — a host of birds, which never seemed to lessen, if fired among, but rather to increase. Even in the chicken-house, where Chicken-Grethe sat, they were distinctly heard; yes, and some jackdaws dared actually cross the threshold. Chicken-Grethe knew every chicken, every duck, since it crept out of the egg. She was proud of her chickens and ducks, proud of the stately house that was built for them. And clean and neat did it look within her little room; her mistress, to whom the chickens and the house belonged, insisted upon this. Now and then she used to come with noble and elegant visitors, to show them the chickens' and ducks' barracks, as she called the house.

She had both arm-chair and wardrobe there, and even a bureau, on the top of which a polished brass plate was placed, with the name, "Grubbe" engraved upon it; that was the name of the family that lived there at the time when the old castle was standing. While they were digging the ground, this brass plate was found, and Degnen had said that it had no real value, except as an old memorial. Degnen knew everything about the place, and of the old times. He possessed a good deal of book learning. His table-drawer was full of manuscripts. He knew a great deal of the old days, but the oldest crow knew perhaps more than he did, and croaked about it in his tongue, but that was the crow tongue.

At the close of a warm summer day, the marsh would cover itself with a mist, thus assuming the aspect of a big lake beyond the aged trees, in which the rooks, crows, and jackdaws lived; and in that way did it look when old Herr Grubbe lived there, and when the old castle was yet standing, with its massive red walls. The dog-chain reached then quite beyond the gateway. They reached the stone-paved hall through the tower, and thence entered the rooms. The windows were narrow, and the panes very small, even in the large hall, where they used to dance. But during the time of the last of the Grubbes, there had been no dancing within the memory of men; and yet there still lay the old kettle-drum, that had been used to make up the music. There stood a cupboard, curiously carved, in which bulbs of flowers were stored away. Frau Grubbe was very fond of raising flowers and trees; her husband preferred to hunt the boar and the wolf, his little daughter Maria his constant companion. At the early age of five, she sat proudly upon her horse, and looked fearlessly about with her coal-black eyes. Nothing gave her greater pleasure than to crack the whip among the hounds. Her father would have liked it better if she had whipped the country boys, that had gathered to gaze at the big folk. The peasant in the hut near the garden had a son, Sören, of the same age with the high-born young lady; he knew how to climb trees, and had to fetch birds down for her. The birds screamed as loud as they could scream, and once one of the biggest struck him in the face, so that the blood ran down his cheeks; they thought that one eye was gone, but it had not been injured. Maria Grubbe called him her own Sören. That was a great favor, which even reflected upon the father, "dirty Tön." He had one day done something wrong, and was condemned to ride upon the wooden horse. This horse stood in the yard; its legs consisted of four poles, its back was made of one rail, and this horse Tön had to ride; and that he might not sit upon it too comfortably, they fastened several bricks to his feet. He made dreadful faces; little Sören wept, and upon his knees begged the high-born young lady to release his father, and she at once ordered that Sören's father should be freed from his horse.

CHICKEN GRETHE'S FAMILY. See page 424.

Finding that she was not obeyed, she stamped upon the pavement with her little feet, and pulled her father's coat-sleeves, and tore them. She insisted upon having her will, and her will she got. Sören's father was released.

Frau Grubbe, who came to the spot, caressed her daughter, and gave her a kind look of approbation out of her mild eyes: Maria understood it not.

To the hunt would she go, but not with her mother, who went through the garden, down to the lake, where the yellow and white water-lilies stood in full bloom, and where the bulrushes were swayed by the gentle winds. She gazed with rapture upon all this luxuriant growth and freshness. "How charming!" said she. And a rare tree grew in the garden; she had planted it herself: its name was "blood beech," a kind of negro among trees, so dark-brown were its leaves. It wanted a great deal of sunlight, or its leaves became green in the cool shade, like those of the other trees, and thus lost their peculiarity. In the high trees were many birds'-nests, also in the shrubs, and in the grass. The birds seemed to understand that they were secure there; nobody dared to pop a gun in that place.

And Maria came with Sören; he knew how to climb, — that we have heard, — and she told him to fetch the eggs, and downy young birds. The parent birds, both the big and small, flew about in terror and agony, — the lapwings of the fields, and the rooks, crows, and jackdaws of the high trees. There was screaming, just as the whole family scream nowadays.

"What are you doing, children?" called the mild lady. "You know that this is wicked work!"

Sören stood dejected; the little high-born young lady looked a little askance, but then said, in an abrupt and pert way, "Father allows me to do this!"

"Away, away!" cried the blackbirds, and away they flew; but they returned the next day, because here they were at home.

The quiet, mild lady did not long remain at that home; our Lord called her away: she was better at home with Him than upon this earth! The church-bells tolled solemnly,

while her remains were carried to the church; the poor men's eyes grew dim: she had always been kind to them.

Nobody took care of her plants after she had gone, and the garden went to ruin.

"Herr Grubbe is a hard man," said they, "but his daughter, young as she is, is a match for him." He would flare up, but she always had her own way.

She had grown to be twelve years old, strong limbed and tall. She looked at the people with her coal-black eyes, rode her horse like a man, and fired her gun like a practiced sportsman. And it so happened that a great visitor came to that region, the very greatest, the young king and his half-brother and comrade, Herr Ulrich Frederick Gyldenlöve; they came to hunt the wild boar, and intended to stay one day and night at Herr Grubbe's place.

Gyldenlöve had the pleasure of sitting beside Maria Grubbe at the dinner-table; he seized her by the head, and gave her a kiss, as if he belonged to the family; but she slapped his face, and told him she did not like him at all. They laughed a good deal about it, as if it had been very amusing. And so, probably, Gyldenlöve had thought, for, five years after that, when Maria had completed her seventeenth year, there came a messenger with a letter from him, asking the hand of the young lady. That was something!

"He is the most distinguished and most accomplished knight in the land," said Herr Grubbe; "you cannot refuse him."

"I do not care much for him," said Maria Grubbe, but she did not refuse the most distinguished man in the land, who sat next to the king.

The silver, and the woolen and linen goods, were sent by ship to Copenhagen, while, ten days afterward, Maria went by land. The ship containing the dowry had contrary wind, or no wind at all: it took four months to go to Copenhagen; and when it did arrive, Frau Gyldenlöve had left.

"I will sooner lie upon hards[1] than upon his bed of silk," said she. "I would rather go barefoot, than ride with him in a carriage!"

[1] The refuse of flax.

Late in the evening of a November day came two women driving into Aarhuus city; it was Gyldenlöve's wife, Maria Grubbe, and her servant. They came from Veile, where they had arrived from Copenhagen in a vessel. They drove to Herr Grubbe's new stone house. He was anything but pleased to see her. He spoke to her harshly, but gave her a chamber to sleep in. She received her beer broth in the morning, but no "good-morning" with it. The father's evil spirit was turned against her; she was not used to it. She had no meek temper either. "As one is spoken to, so does one answer," thought she; and thus she did answer. And of her husband she spoke with loathing and hatred, and said that she was too modest and virtuous to live with such a man.

So a year went by, and not at all pleasantly. Many hard words passed between father and daughter, and hard words bear hard fruit. What could be the end?

"We two can never live under one roof," said the father one day. "You may move to the old homestead; but I advise you rather to cut your tongue off, than to set lies afloat."

They separated; she, with her servant, to go to the old homestead, where she was born and brought up, and where that mild and pious lady, her mother, lay buried in the vaults of the church. The only occupant of the place was the old steward. Cobwebs hung in heavy festoons from the ceilings, black and sombre. In the garden grew what had a mind to grow; hops and bindweeds twined nets between trees and shrubs. Hemlock and nettle grew up, and became strong. The blood beech was outgrown, and stood completely in the shade, its leaves green, like the leaves of the other and common trees; its glory had passed away.

The rooks, crows, and jackdaws fluttered in great crowds about the high chestnut-trees. They screamed and croaked, as if they had great news to tell each other.

And here she was again, the child that had ordered their nests to be robbed of eggs and young ones. The thief himself, that had stolen them, was climbing leafless trees now, for he sat in the high mast-heads and received his share with the rope's-end, if he did not behave himself.

All this was told by Degnen, in our time; he had put it together from books and notes, and it was stowed away, with much else, in his table-drawer. "Up and down is the world's way," said he: "it is wonderful to contemplate;" and we will further listen how it went with Maria Grubbe, thereby not forgetting Chicken-Grethe that sits quietly in her chicken-house. Maria Grubbe did not sit as peacefully in her time.

The winter passed, and spring and summer went, and the stormy autumn came again with sleet and rain. It was a monotonous life, a wearisome life, there in the old homestead.

And Maria Grubbe seized her gun, and went out upon the heath to shoot hares and foxes, and what birds she could hit. On such occasions she often met with sportsmen; and once she met the noble baronet, Herr Palle Dyne, from Norrebök. He was there, with his gun and dogs. He was a tall and powerful man, and liked much to boast of his strength, when they talked together. He might have been a match for the famous Herr Broekenhuus, from Egeskoi, at Fyen, who lives yet in the memory of the people, as a man of wonderful strength. Like him, had Palle Dyne fastened an iron chain, with a bugle, over his gateway; and when he returned from the hunt, he was wont to seize that chain with his hands, lift himself *and horse* from the ground, and blow the bugle.

"You must come to my castle and see that, Frau Maria," said he; "we have fine and bracing air at Norrebök."

At what particular time she came to Norrebök is not recorded; but upon the candlesticks in Norrebök church was written, that they were presented by Palle Dyne and Maria Grubbe, from Norrebök castle. Strength of body had Palle Dyne: he could drink like a sponge; he was like a barrel that could not be filled, and he snored like a whole pig-sty, and looked red and puffed.

"A hog and a fool is he," said Frau Palle Dyne, Grubbe's daughter; and she grew very soon tired of him, and with the life she led, and it became no better.

One day dinner was ready, and the dishes grew cold; Palle Dyne was out to hunt the fox, and Frau Dyne could not be found. Palle Dyne came home at midnight; Frau Dyne did

not come home at midnight, neither the following morning. She had turned her back on Norrebök, and rode off without good-by or farewell.

The weather was cold and rainy, and the wind was high; a flock of black and croaking birds passed over her: they were not as houseless as she was.

She rode first southward, near to the German Empire; a few gold rings with precious stones, were converted into ready money. Then she turned to the east, and then toward the west; she rode without aim, and was angry with everything and everybody, even with the good Lord Himself. She felt very wretched, and soon her body became so too: it could scarcely digest its food. The lapwing was scared from the little hill upon which she fell down. The birds screamed as they always do, "You thief, you thief." Never had she stolen her neighbors' goods; but bird's eggs and young birds had she taken, when a child, from the little hills and the big trees. All this came to her mind.

She could see the reed-grass upon the beach from where she lay; there dwelt some fishermen: but she could not go so far, she was too sick. The large white cormorant came flying over her, and screeched as the rooks, crows, and jackdaws did at home among the garden trees, where she had lived when a child. The birds came nearer and nearer; at last they seemed to turn black, and then it grew entirely black before her eyes.

When she again opened her eyes, she felt that she was lifted up and carried away, — a tall and strong man had taken her in his arms. She looked straight into his hoary face; he had a scar over one eye, so that his eyebrow looked as if split in two. He carried her, sick as she was, to the vessel, where they received him with hard words for bringing home such burden.

The vessel set sail the next day. Maria Grubbe was not left on shore, — she had to go with them. Will she ever return home? Yes! but when and how?

Degnen knew about that also, and it was no tale composed by himself; he had the whole remarkable story from a trustworthy book, which we ourselves can take up and read. The

Danish historian, Ludwig Holberg, who has written so many readable books, and so many merry comedies, through which we can get acquainted with his time and its people, speaks of Maria Grubbe in his letters, where and in what part of the world he met her. It is worth our while to hear him; but, for all that, we will not forget Chicken-Grethe, who sits so merry and good in her stately chicken-house.

The vessel sailed away with Maria Grubbe . . . . it was there we left off. Years passed, and years passed. The pest was raging in Copenhagen in the year 1711. The Queen of Denmark moved to her German homestead, the King left his kingdom's capital. Every one who could, hurried away. The students also, and even such as had free room and board, trotted out of the city. One of them, the last that yet was left of the so-called Borch's College, near the palace, was now leaving. It was two o'clock in the morning; he went with his knapsack filled more with books and manuscripts than with clothes. A raw, damp mist was hanging over the city. Not one human being was seen in the streets through which he passed. All around, upon gateways and doors, stood written the significant cross, — a token that the malady was there, or that all the people had died. And even in the broad and winding Codmanger Street was not a man to be seen, — that was the name of the street from the round tower to the king's palace. Suddenly an ammunition wagon came rattling by; the driver cracked his whip, urging the horses into a gallop. The young student pressed his hands to his face, breathing the fumes of a strong spiritus from a sponge which he carried in a brass box. From the tavern, in one of the streets, came sounds of songs and loathsome laughter, — people were drinking away the night to forget that Death stood at the door, beckoning them to follow him upon the ammunition wagon, with the other dead men. The student hurried toward the palace bridge; he saw two vessels there, one of them casting loose, to get away from the infected city.

"If God grants us life, and if we also get wind enough, we go to Grönsund on Falster," said the shipmaster; and then asked the student, who wished to go with him, what his name was.

"Ludwig Holberg,"[1] said the student; and that name sounded like any other name. Now it sounds like one of Denmark's proudest names; at that time he was only a young, unknown student.

The vessel passed by the castle. It was not yet daylight when they came out into the open sea. Then came a light breeze, the sails swelled, the young student turned his face toward the fresh winds — and fell overboard into the water: and that was not exactly what he ought to have done.

On the morning of the third day, the vessel was already at anchor off Falster.

"Do you know of anybody in this place, with whom I can board for little money?" asked Holberg of the captain.

"I believe you will do best to go to the ferry-master's wife, in Borrehuus," said he. "If you would be very polite, call her Mother Sören Sörensen Möller; but there is danger of turning her head, if you flatter her too much. Her husband was arrested for some crime, therefore she manages the ferry-boat herself. What fists she has!"

The student seized his knapsack, and went to the ferry-house. The door was not locked; he lifted the latch, and stepped right into the stone-paved room, where a big double bedstead, with ample feather-beds, was the most noticeable object. A white hen, with small chickens, was tethered to the bedstead, and she had upset the washbowl; the water was running all over the floor. Nobody was there, except a child in the adjoining chamber, that lay in a cradle. He looked out of the window: the ferry-boat came back with only one person in it. Whether it was man or woman, was hard to tell. The person was wrapt in a big coat, with a hood drawn over its head. Now the boat was fastened: and a woman it was that entered the room. She looked rather imposing, as she stood up straight. Two proud eyes were set under two black eyebrows. And that was Mother Sören, the ferry-master's wife. The rooks, crows, and jackdaws persisted in croaking another name more familiar to us.

Stern she looked, and cared little to talk much. In a few words she agreed that the student might remain with her and

[1] Holberg is the name of an eminent Danish writer, who died in 1754

board for a while, until things should look better in Copenhagen.

Now and then a pair of honest burghers, from the neighboring trading village, came out to the ferry-house. There came Frands Knivsmed, and Sivert Posekiger; they drank a mug of ale in the ferry-house, and sat discussing with the student. He was a clear-headed young man, that knew his preachings, as they called it; he read Greek and Latin, and knew about many learned things.

"The less one knows, the less one is oppressed by it," said Mother Sören, when they talked to her about the student and his learning.

"It is too hard for you," said Holberg one day, when he saw her soak the linen in the strong lye, and then split the knotty stumps, to get firewood.

"That is *my* business," said she.

"Have you always, from childhood, been obliged to drudge and slave in this way?"

"You might read the answer in my fists," was her reply, showing him at the same time two small, but strong and hard hands, with workworn nails.

"You can read, can't you?"

Came Christmas time, and heavy snowfall, and Jack Frost made himself at home, sending out his winds to blow fiercely, as if they washed people's faces with snow-water. Mother Sören cared for neither; throwing the cloak around her, and the hood over her head, she went about her business. It grew dark in the house early in the afternoons, and then she would throw pitch-pine on the fire-place, and wood, and sit down by it and darn her stockings; there was no one else to do it. Toward the end of the day she had spoken more words to the student than she was in the habit of doing: she had spoken about her husband.

"He has by accident committed manslaughter upon a Dragö-shipper: and that's why they have put him in irons, and make him work for three years on the island. He is only a common sailor; and therefore, you know, the law must have its course."

"The law is made for the higher classes also," said Holberg.

"Do you think so?" said Mother Sören, and stared into the fire; and, after a while, continued: "Have you heard the story of Kay Lykke, who ordered one of his churches to be torn down; and when the preacher, Mads, thundered against it from his pulpit, he had him put in irons, and thrown into prison; and then appointed himself judge and jury, found him guilty of high crime, condemned him to be beheaded, and had his head cut off. Was that an accident's doing? I trow not; and yet Kay Lykke was never punished."

"He was in his right, according to the fashion of his time," said Holberg; "but we are beyond that."

"Try to make fools believe that," said Mother Sören, and she rose from her seat, and went into the chamber where Jösen, the baby, lay. After having cleaned and aired it, she made the student's bed; he had the big feather-bed, being more sensitive to cold than she was, although he was born in Norway.

New Year's Day came; it was a beautiful, clear, and sunny morning. There had been such severe frost that the snow-banks had frozen so hard one could walk upon them. The bells in the village called the people to church. The student, Holberg, wrapped himself in his woolen cloak, and started to go. Rooks drew croaking and screeching over Borrehuus; so did the crows and jackdaws; they made such a noise, you could hardly hear the church-bells. Mother Sören was in the yard filling a brass kettle with snow, to melt it over the fire, to get drinking-water. She gazed at the swarm of dusky birds, and had her own thoughts.

Student Holberg went to church, and on his way back passed Sivert Posekiger's house. He stood in his doorway, and invited him to come in and warm himself with a bowl of warm beer, with molasses and ginger in it. Their conversation turned upon Mother Sören; but Posekiger knew little about her: there were not many that did; she was no native of Falster." She had probably seen better days," said he. "Her husband was a common sailor, with a hot temper; he had killed a Dragö-shipper; he beat his wife, and yet she always would take his part."

"*I* should never stand such treatment," said Posekiger's

wife, "and I am also of good family; my father was the king's stocking weaver."

"And that is why you are also wedded to a royal official," said Holberg, bowing to her and her husband.

Epiphany Eve came, and Mother Sören lit a candle for the Three Holy Kings: that is, three small tallow candles, which she herself had prepared.

"A candle for every man," said Holberg.

"Every man!" exclaimed the woman, looking sternly at him.

"Every wise man from the East," said Holberg.

"O so!" said she, and sat silent for a while. But on that Three Holy Kings' Eve, he learned many things that he did not know before.

"You have a kind feeling for him you are wedded to," said Holberg; "and yet people tell me that he treated you badly every day."

"That touches none but myself," said Mother Sören. "These blows would have done me good, had I received them when a child; now I get them, probably, to atone for my sins. I only know the good he has done me," and here she rose straight up. "When I fell down on the heath, sick and weak, and nobody moved to come to my assistance, unless it were the rooks, the crows, and the jackdaws (and they only came to pick at me), he came and carried me in his arms, and received harsh words for bringing home such booty to the ship. I am not made of so light stuff, to be sick, and therefore recovered soon. Every one has his faults, and Sören has his. One must not judge the horse by the halter. With Sören I have had a pleasanter life than with him they called the greatest and most polished man of all the king's subjects. I have been married to Governor Gyldenlöve, half-brother to the king. After him, I took Palle Dyne. Hip for hap! Every one after his fashion, and I after mine. That was a long prattle, and now you know it." And Mother Sören left the room.

This was Maria Grubbe, with whom fortune's ball had been rolling so wonderfully. She did not live to see many more Epiphany feasts. Holberg has it noted in his book

CHICKEN GRETHE'S FAMILY. See page 435.

that she died in 1716; but he has not written down, and probably did not know it, that when Mother Sören, as they called her, lay on her sick-bed at Borrehuus, a multitude of dark, big birds flew away over her house, noiselessly, without screeching, as if they were aware that silence belonged to a burial. As soon as she was under the earth, the birds left, but were seen on that very evening in Jylland, on the very homestead, in unusual number. Rooks, crows, and jackdaws screamed in each other's ears as if they had a great deal to tell: they croaked, perhaps, of him who, when a boy, robbed them of their eggs and young ones, — the peasant boy, who received a garter of iron from the king, and was kept on King's island, — and also of the high-born young lady that died a ferry-woman at Grönsund.

"Right, right!" they croaked.

And the whole tribe croaked "Right, right!" when the old castle was pulled down. "And this they cry yet, when there is nothing to croak about," said Degnen, when he had finished the story.

The family had died out, the castle was torn down, and where that stood, stands now the chicken-house, with a gilt weather-cock at the top, and with old Chicken-Grethe within: she sits there, well pleased with her dwelling. Had she not come there, she would have been in the poor-house. The doves sat cooing above her, the chickens tattled around her, and the ducks gaggled. Nobody knew her; relations she had not; out of charity she came there, and offspring she had none. But, for all that, she had relatives. She knew them not; neither did Degnen, in spite of all the written stuff that was in his table-drawer. But one of the crows knew them, and he told of it. He had heard of her mother and grandmother — of Chicken-Grethe's mother and grandmother, whom we also know, when she, as a child, rode over the drawbridge, and looked so proudly about, as if the whole world, and all the birds, belonged to her; we saw her also in the heath, and in Borrehuus. Her grandchild, the last of the family, had come home again, where the family castle had stood, where the dusky wild birds croaked; but she sat among her tame birds, known by them, and on friendly terms with them, well pleased with life, and old enough to die.

"Grave, grave!" croaked the crows. And Chicken-Grethe was laid in a nice grave. Nobody knows where it is, except the old crow, unless he also has died.

And now we are acquainted with the story of the old castle, and Chicken-Grethe's whole family.

THE BIRD OF POPULAR SONG.

IT is winter time; earth has a sheet of snow, looking like marble hewn from a quarry; the sky is high and clear; the wind is as sharp as an elfin sword; the trees stand like white corals, like blooming almond branches; we breathe the freshness, as it were, of alpine heights. Beautiful is night with streaming Northern Lights and countless glittering stars.

The storms come; the clouds arise, scattering forth swan feathers; the snow-flakes drift; they cover the hollow lane, and the house it leads to, the open field, and the close streets. But we sit in the snug room, by the ruddy fire, and tell tales of olden times. Now listen to a legend.

"Near the open sea stood a warrior's grave, and there at midnight sat the spectre of the buried hero; a king had he been; the golden ring encircled his brow; his hair fluttered in the wind; he was clad in iron and steel; his head drooped heavily, and he sighed like the sighing of an unhallowed spirit.

"Then a ship neared the shore. The men cast anchor and came to land. Among them was a Scald; he drew nigh unto the kingly shape, and asked, saying, 'What is thy sorrow and thy suffering?'

"Then answered the dead, 'No one hath sung of my feats; they are dead and gone. Song hath never borne them over the lands and into the hearts of men; therefore I have never rest nor peace.'

"And he recounted his labors and bold exploits; the men of his own time had known them, but not sung them, for there was then no singer in the land.

"Then the old Scald struck the strings of the harp, and he sang of the hero, — of his daring in youth, his strength in manhood, and the greatness of his noble deeds. The face of the dead brightened therewith, like the edge of the cloud

in moonlight; joyful and blest arose the form in beams of glory, and vanished like a trail of the Northern Lights. There was nothing left but the green turfy mound with the runeless stones; but over it, at the last clang of the chords, even as if it had come out of the harp, soared a little bird, a most beautiful song-bird, with the ringing melodies of the thrush, with the speaking melodies of the human heart, home-land tunes, as the bird of passage hears them. The song-bird flew over hill and dale, over wood and field. It was the Bird of Popular Song, that never dies."

We hear the song, we listen to it now in the winter evening, while the white bees are swarming outside, and the storm-wind shakes the house. The bird sings not only hero lays, it has many a sweet and plaintive song of love in the North, so tender and so true; it gives us fairy tales in tones and words; it has proverbs and mystic rhymes that make the old world speak, runes laid under a dead man's tongue. We know its home-land; it is the Bird of Popular Song!

In the heathen days of yore, in the Viking times, its nest was in the harp of the bard. In the days of the baron's castle, when the iron fist held the scales of justice, and power was right, when the peasant and the dog were of equal value, where then did the singing-bird find a shelter and nest? Brutality and servility took no heed of it. In the bay-window of the castle, where the lady sat over her parchment, and wrote down old records in song or in legend; in the turf-built hut, where the wandering peddler sat on the bench by the good-wife, and told her tales, — there above them fluttered and flew, twittered and sang the bird that never dies, as long as earth has a green mound for its foot, — the Bird of Popular Song.

Now it sings for us in here. Out of doors are night and snow-storm — the bird lays runes under our tongue, and we know our home-land. God speaks our mother tongue to us in the melodies of the song-bird: and olden times arise before us; the faded colors grow fresh again; song and tale cheer us with a blessed draught, that lifts both mind and soul till the evening seems like a Christmas feast. The snow is drifting, the ice is crashing, the storm-wind is their king and master; he is a lord, but not *our Lord*.

It is winter time; the wind is sharp like an elfin sword; the snow is drifting; it has been drifting, so it seems, for days and weeks, and lies like a monstrous snowberg upon the great town — a heavy dream in the winter night. All beneath is shrouded and shapeless; only the golden cross on the church, the symbol of faith, rises above the snow-grave, and glitters in the blue air, in clear sunshine.

And away over the buried town fly the birds, the small and the great ones; they chirp and sing as best they may, each bird in his own tongue.

First comes the flock of sparrows; they chirp about all the odds and ends in street and lane, in the nest and in the house; they know stories of the kitchen and of the drawing-room. "We know that buried town," so they say; "every living soul there has cheep, cheep, cheep!"

The black raven and crows fly away over the white snow. "Scrape, scrape!" they scream; "down below there is something still to pick, something for the maw, this is the main thing; people down there think much the same, and what they think is, craw, craw craw!"

The wild swans come on whistling wings, and sing of the greatness and the glory there are still springing in the thoughts and hearts of men down in the snow-wrapt slumber of yonder city. That is not the sleep of death; life is at the fountain-head; we are warned of its presence there by tones of music, now solemn as an organ-peal, now thrilling as a strain from the elfin mound, now like an Ossianic song, and now like the winged rush of a Valkyria. Hark! what a wondrous harmony! It speaks into our inmost heart, it lifts our soul, it is the Bird of Popular Song we hear. And now, even now, God's warm breath breathes from above; the snow-cover splits, the sun shines through it; spring is at hand; the birds are coming — new races with the same old homely tones. Listen to the Drapa of the year! the mighty snow-storm, the winter night's drowsy dream; their bonds shall be broken, and all this buried life shall rise again, at the beautiful Voice of Popular Song — the bird that never dies.

THE TEA-POT.

THERE was a proud Tea-pot, proud of being porcelain, proud of its long spout, proud of its broad handle; it had something before and behind: the spout before, the handle behind, and that was what it talked about; but it did not talk of its lid — that was cracked, it was riveted, it had defects, and one does not talk about one's defects, there are plenty of others to do that. The cups, the cream pot, and sugar bowl, the whole tea-service would be reminded much more of the lid's imperfection and talk about that, than of the sound handle and the remarkable spout. The Tea-pot knew it.

"I know you," it said within itself, "I know, too, my imperfection, and I am well aware that in that very thing is seen my humility, my modesty. Imperfections have we all, but then one also has an endowment. The cups get a handle, the sugar bowl a lid, I get both, and one thing besides in front which they never got. I get a spout, and that makes me a queen on the tea-table. The sugar bowl and cream pot are allowed to be tasty serving maids, but I am the one who gives, yes, the one high in council. I spread abroad a blessing among thirsty mankind. In my insides the Chinese leaves are worked up in the boiling, tasteless water."

All this said the Tea-pot in its fresh young life. It stood on the table that was spread for tea, it was lifted by a very delicate hand: but the very delicate hand was awkward, the Tea-pot fell, the spout snapped off, the handle snapped off, the lid was no worse to speak of — the worst had been spoken of that. The Tea-pot lay in a swoon on the floor, while the boiling water ran out of it. It was a horrid shame, but the worst was that they jeered at it; they jeered at it and not at the awkward hand.

"I never shall lose that recollection!" said the Tea-pot,

when it afterward talked to itself of the course of its life. "I was called an invalid, and placed in a corner, and the day after was given away to a woman who begged victuals. I fell into poverty, and stood dumb both outside and in, but there as I stood, began my better life. One is one thing and becomes quite another. Earth was placed in me: for a Tea-pot that is the same as being buried, but in the earth was placed a flower bulb. Who placed it there, who gave it, I know not; given it was, and it became a compensation for the Chinese leaves and the boiling water, a compensation for the broken handle and spout. And the bulb lay in the earth, the bulb lay in me, it became my heart, my living heart, such as I never before had possessed. There was life in me, power and might: the pulses beat, the bulb put forth sprouts, it was the springing up of thoughts and feelings: they burst forth in flower. I saw it, I bore it, I forgot myself in its delight. Blessed is it to forget one's self in another. It gave me no thanks, it did not think of me — it was admired and praised. I was so glad at that: how happy must it not have been. One day I heard it said that it deserved a better pot. I was thumped hard on my back — that was a great affliction; but the flower was put in a better pot — and I was thrown away in the yard where I lie as an old potsherd; but I have the memory: *that* I can never lose.

THE MUSE OF THE COMING AGE.

THE Muse of the Coming Age, whom our great-grandchildren, or possibly a later generation still, but not ourselves, shall make acquaintance with, — how does she manifest herself? What is her face and form? What is the burden of her song? Whose heart-strings shall she touch? To what summit shall she lift her century?

What questions these, for a busy day as ours? when poesy comes nigh to being in the way; when it is well known that the very "immortal" productions of to-day's poets will, in the future, perhaps exist but in the form of charcoal tracings on a prison wall, — a bait and food for hunters of curiosities.

Poesy is required to do service in the battle-ranks, — at the very least to bear the challenge in the wars of party, whether it be blood or ink that flow therein.

This is a partial version, some will say; poesy has not grown obsolete.

Nay, there are yet men who on their holiday grow conscious of an appetite for poetry; and, certes, no sooner do they feel that spiritual rumbling in their comparatively nobler parts, than forthwith is made a levy on the man of books for no less than four shillings' worth of poetry, of styles the most approved. Others take much pleasure in such as they can find thrown into bargains; they draw contentment from the scrap that's on the grocer's wrapper: 'tis so much cheaper — and economy is wealth! Demand is found for what there is supplied; and that is enough! The future's poetry, no less than the future's music, is reckoned with the Don Quixotiana; to speak of it were much like speaking of a voyage of discovery to Uranus.

Time is too brief and precious for mere sport of fantasy; and what is — to speak seriously for once — what is

Poesy? These resonant expectorations of feeling and of thought, they are but offspring of the nerves' vibrations. Enthusiasm, joy, and pain, and all the organism's movements, the *savants* tell us, are but *nerve-vibrations.* We, each of us, are but Æolian harps.

But who touches these strings? Who causes them to vibrate and to sound? The Spirit, the Godhead's unseen Spirit, who echoes in them *his* emotion, *his* feeling; and these are understood of the fellow-harps, which respond in melting harmonies or else in strong-contracting dissonance. Such was it, and such will it be, in mankind's grand onward march in freedom's consciousness.

Each century — each world's age, one may likewise say — has its chief expression in its poetry: born in the passing era, it issues forth and reigns in the new era which succeeds.

Thus, 'mid to-day's roar of machinery, she is already born, — the Muse of the Coming Age. Our welcome to her! may she hear it, or read it on a time, — perchance among the charcoal tracings which we mentioned erst!

The rocking of her cradle reached from the farthest point trod by man's foot on polar voyage, so far as eye can peer into the polar sky's jet depth. We never heard the rocking for engine-clatter, locomotive-scream, the thunder of the quarry-blast, and the bursting of the ancient mental fetters.

In the vast workshop of the present she is born, where steam exerts his sinews, and where *Master Bloodless* and his lads are toiling day and night.

She holds the womanly heart of love, the vestal's sacred flame, and passion's furnace. Reason's ray, in all its never-ending, shifting prismic hues of ages, is hers. Fancy's vast swany tunic is her pride and strength; weft of science — the "elemental forces" — gave it power of wing.

On father's side, she is of the people's blood, — sound of sense and heart, with earnest eye, and humor on her lips. Mother is the high-born, academy-schooled emigrant's[1] daughter, with the golden Rococo reminiscences. The Muse of the Coming Age has blood and soul in her of both.

[1] Referring to the emigration of the first French Revolution. — *Translator.*

Splendid birthday gifts were laid upon her cradle. In plenty, as 'twere sugar-plums, are strewn there Nature's occult riddles, with their solutions. The diver's bell yields mystic "knickknacks" from the deep. The heavens' chart, — that lofty-hung Pacific Ocean with its myriad isles, each a world, — was broidered in the cradle-cloth. The sun her pictures painted; photography her toys provides.

The nurse has sung to her of *Eivind Skalde-spiller* and *Firdusi*, of the *Minnesingers*, and what *Heine*, boyish-bold, sang from his very poet's soul. Much, all too much, the nurse has told her; she knows the *Edda*, the old great-grandam's mother's frightful-sounding tales, where horrors sweep the air on bloody wing. The entire Orient's "*Thousand-Nights-and-One*" she heard in the fourth part of an hour.

The Muse of the Coming Age is but a child; yet she has sprung from out the swathing-clothes, is full of will, though still not knowing what she wills.

And now she is at play in her vast play-house, filled with gems of art and rococo. Greek tragedy and Roman comedy stand sculptured there in marble. The hymns of the nations, like withered vines, festoon the walls: her breath upon them, — and in fresh perfume they blossom forth. The tones and thoughts of *Mozart*, *Glück*, *Beethoven*, and the great masters all, encircle her in sempiternal chords. On her book-shelves many are laid to rest who in their time immortal were; and room is yet for many another, whose name, but erst heard clicking from the telegraph of immortality, dies with the telegram.

Fearfully much she has read, all too much, (for is she not born of our age?) and woefully much must again be forgotten; but the Muse, she will know how to forget.

She thinks not of her song, which shall live and flourish in millenniums to come, by the side of *Moses'* legends and *Bidpai's* gold-crowned fable of Reynard's craft and luck. She thinks not of her mission, nor of her tuneful future; she still is toying, while the nations' strifes yet stir the air, and sound-figures of pen and cannon mingle to and fro, — runes of mystic reading.

She wears a *Garibaldi* hat, and meanwhile reads her *Shakespeare*, and for a moment stops to think: When I am grown, *he*

may at last be acted! *Calderon* rests in the sarcophagus of his works, under the tablet of fame. *Holberg* — for the Muse is cosmopolitan — she has bound together with *Molière*, *Plautus*, and *Aristophanes;* but most she reads *Molière.*

She is free from the unrest that drives the chamois of the Alps, and still her soul pants for the salt of life as does the chamois for the mountain salt; a calm floats through her heart, as in the ancient Hebrew tales the nomad's voice was wafted o'er green plains 'neath starry skies; and still in song her heart swells mightier than the Thessalonian warrior's inspired bosom in the Grecian eld.

How is it with her Christendom? She has learned philosophy's ins and outs; the elements broke one of her milk-teeth, but a new one did grow after; the fruit of knowledge she tasted when yet in the cradle, ate and grew wise, — so that "*Immortality*" flashed out from her in mankind's genial thought.

When begins the Coming Age of Poesy? When shall the Muse be known? When heard?

On a wondrous spring morning, on the locomotive dragon shall she come, careering over viaducts and through dark tunnels; or else on the puffing dolphin's back across the bland but mighty sea; or else in air borne on the pinions of *Montgolfier's* Bird *Roc*, alighting in the land whence first her god-like voice shall greet the race of Man. Whence? Is it from *Columbus's* new-found land, — the Land of Freedom, where the Aborigine is game, and the African a beast of burden? — the land wherefrom we heard the song of *Hiawatha?* Is it from the quarter of antipodes, — that golden island in the Southern Sea, — the land of opposites, where black swans sing in mossy forests? Or from the land where *Memnon's* pillar rang and rings, — but we understood not the desert-dwelling sphinx of song? Is it from the isle of anthracite, where *Shakespeare*, since the age of Elizabeth, has reigned? Is it from *Tycho Braye's* home, which suffered him not; or from *California's* adventurous shore, where the Wellingtonea lifts her head, — the queen of all earth's forests?

When shall the star be lit, — the star on the Muse's brow? — the blossom in whose petals is inscribed the future's thought of beauty in form, and tint, and fragrance?

"What is the Muse's platform?" queries the astute politician of the day. "What will she?"

Better ask what will she not!

She will not appear a ghost of times defunct! she will not build dramas from the shining shards of olden scenes, nor deck the bungles of dramatic architecture with the flaunting hues of lyric drapery! her flight forth from among us will be as from the car of Thespis to the marble amphitheatre. She will not shatter healthy human speech to fragments, and clink these together for a music-box with tones of troubadour-tourneys. Nor will she blazon Verse patrician and plain Prose plebeian! twin-paired are they in voice, and sense, and might. Nor will she chisel out from Iceland's saga-blocks the ancient gods! for they are dead: nor sympathy nor fellowship awaits them of our day! Nor will she bid her generation hide their thought in French-novel fabric; nor will she numb them with the chloroform of every-day *historiæ!* — a life-elixir will she bring: her song in verse or prose is brief, and clear, and rich! The nations' heart-beats, — each but a letter in the endless alphabet of growth, — she grasps the letters each with equal lovingness, and ranges them in words and weaves her words in rhythms for her Age's Hymn.

And when shall the hour be full?

'Twill be long to us, who yet are lingering back; 'tis brief for those who flew ahead.

Soon falls the Chinese Wall. Europe's railways hedge old Asia's fast-sealed culture-archives, — the opposing streams of human culture meet! — mayhap with thunderous clang resounds the whirl; the wiseacres of our time will tremble with the sound and hear therein a judgment, the fall of the ancient gods; forgetting that hereneath may times and peoples pass away, and but a little image, locked in a word-casket, remain of each, floating as a lotus flower on eternity's stream, and telling us that they all were flesh of our flesh, in various garb: the *Jewish* image shines radiant from the *Bible;* the *Greek* from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssce;* and ours? — Inquire of the Coming Muse, at the judgment, when the new heaven is lifted into light and sight.

All power of steam, all prints of modern times were lifting-

levers! *Master Bloodless* and his busy lads, who seem our day's all-powerful kings, are but its servants, — blackmoor slaves, which adorn the festive hall, unmask its treasures, deck its boards, for the great feast-day when the Muse — a child of innocence, a maid of inspiration, a matron of sweet calm and wisdom — shall lift on high the wondrous Lamp of Poesy, — the rich, full, human heart, aflame with fire of God.

Be greeted, thou Muse of Poesy's Coming Age! may our greeting be lifted up and heard, as the cricket's hymn of thanks is heard, — the cricket that beneath the plough is crushed, while a new spring-time is dawning and the plough-share draws its furrow through us crickets, crushing us, that health may blossom to the Coming Generation.

Be greeted, O Muse of the Coming Age!

"THE WILL-O-THE-WISP IS IN THE TOWN,"

SAYS THE MOOR-WOMAN.

THERE was a man who once knew many stories, but they had slipped away from him — so he said. The Story that used to visit him of its own accord no longer came and knocked at his door: and why did it come no longer? It is true enough that for days and years the man had not thought of it, had not expected it to come and knock; and if he had expected it, it would certainly not have come; for without there was war, and within was the care and sorrow that war brings with it.

The stork and the swallows came back from their long journey, for they thought of no danger; and, behold, when they arrived, the nest was burnt, the habitations of men were burnt, the hedges were all in disorder, and everything seemed gone, and the enemy's horses were stamping in the old graves. Those were hard, gloomy times, but they came to an end.

And now they were past and gone, so people said; and yet no story came and knocked at the door, or gave any tidings of its presence.

"I suppose it must be dead, or gone away with many other things," said the man.

But the story never dies. And more than a whole year went by, and he longed — O, so very much! — for the story.

"I wonder if the story will ever come back again, and knock?"

And he remembered it so well in all the various forms in which it had come to him, — sometimes young and charming, like spring itself, sometimes as a beautiful maiden, with a wreath of thyme in her hair, and a beechen branch in her hand, and with eyes that gleamed like deep woodland lakes in the bright sunshine.

Sometimes it had come to him in the guise of a peddler, and had opened its box and let silver ribbon come fluttering out, with verses and inscriptions of old remembrances.

But it was most charming of all when it came as an old grandmother, with silvery hair, and such large sensible eyes; she knew so well how to tell about the oldest times, long before the Princesses spun with the golden spindles, and the dragons lay outside the castle, guarding them. She told with such an air of truth that black spots danced before the eyes of all who heard her, and the floor became black with human blood; terrible to see and to hear, and yet so entertaining, because such a long time had passed since it all happened.

"Will it ever knock at my door again?" said the man; and he gazed at the door, so that black spots came before his eyes and upon the floor; he did not know if it was blood, or mourning crape from the dark heavy days.

And as he sat thus, the thought came upon him, whether the story might not have hidden itself, like the Princess in the old tale? And he would now go in search of it; if he found it, it would beam in new splendor, lovelier than ever.

"Who knows? Perhaps it has hidden itself in the straw that balances on the margin of the well. Carefully, carefully! Perhaps it lies hidden in a certain flower — that flower in one of the great books on the book-shelf."

And the man went and opened one of the newest books, to gain information on this point; but there was no flower to be found. There he read about Holger Danske; and the man read that the tale had been invented and put together by a monk in France; that it was a romance, "translated into Danish, and printed in that language;" that Holger Danske had never really lived, and consequently could never come again, as we have sung, and have been so glad to believe. And William Tell was treated just like Holger Danske. These were all only myths — nothing on which we could depend; and yet it is all written in a very learned book.

"Well, I shall believe what I believe!" said the man; "there grows no plantain where no foot has trod."

And he closed the book and put it back in its place, and went to the fresh flowers at the window; perhaps the story

might have hidden itself in the red tulips, with the golden yellow edges, or in the fresh rose, or in the beaming camellia. The sunshine lay among the flowers, but no story.

The flowers which had been here in the dark troublous time had been much more beautiful; but they had been cut off, one after another, to be woven into wreaths and placed in coffins, and the flag had waved over them! Perhaps the story had been buried with the flowers; but then the flowers would have known of it, and the coffin would have heard it, and every little blade of grass that shot forth would have told of it. The story never dies.

Perhaps it has been here once, and has knocked — but who had eyes or ears for it in those times? People looked darkly, gloomily, and almost angrily at the sunshine of spring, at the twittering birds, and all the cheerful green; the tongue could not even bear the old, merry, popular songs, and they were laid in the coffin with so much that our heart held dear. The story may have knocked without obtaining a hearing; there was none to bid it welcome, and so it may have gone away.

"I will go forth and seek it! Out in the country! out in the wood! and on the open sea-beach!"

Out in the country lies an old manor-house, with red walls, pointed gables, and a red flag that floats on the tower. The nightingale sings among the finely fringed beech leaves, looking at the blooming apple-trees of the garden, and thinking that they bear roses. Here the bees are mightily busy in the summer time, and hover round their queen with their humming song. The autumn has much to tell of the wild chase, of the leaves of the trees, and of the races of men that are passing away together. The wild swans sing at Christmas time on the open water, while in the old hall the guests by the fireside gladly listen to songs and to old legends.

Down into the old part of the garden, where the great avenue of wild chestnut-trees lures the wanderer to tread its shades, went the man who was in search of the story; for here the wind had once murmured something to him of "Waldemar Daae and his Daughters." The Dryad in the tree,

who was the story-mother herself, had here told him the "Dream of the old Oak-tree." Here, in the time of the ancestral mother, had stood clipped hedges, but now only ferns and stinging-nettles grew there, hiding the scattered fragments of old sculptured figures; the moss is growing in their eyes, but they can see as well as ever, which was more than the man could do who was in search of the story, for he could not find it. Where could it be?

The crows flew past him by hundreds across the old trees, and screamed, "Krah! da! — Krah! da!"

And he went out of the garden, and over the grass-plot of the yard, into the alder grove; there stood a little six-sided house, with a poultry-yard and a duck-yard. In the middle of the room sat the old woman, who had the management of the whole, and who knew accurately about every egg that was laid, and about every chicken that could creep out of an egg. But she was not the story of which the man was in search; that she could attest with a Christian certificate of baptism and of vaccination that lay in her drawer.

Without, not far from the house, is a hill covered with red-thorn and broom; here lies an old grave-stone, which was brought here many years ago from the church-yard of the provincial town, a remembrance of one of the most honored councilors of the place; his wife and his five daughters, all with folded hands and stiff ruffs, stand round him. One could look at them so long, that it had an effect upon the thoughts, and these reacted upon the stones, as if they were telling of old times; at least it had been so with the man who was in search of the story.

As he came nearer, he noticed a living butterfly sitting on the forehead of the sculptured councilor. The butterfly flapped its wings, and flew a little bit farther, and then returned fatigued to sit upon the grave-stone, as if to point out what grew there. Four-leaved shamrocks grew there; there were seven specimens close to each other. When fortune comes, it comes in a heap. He plucked the shamrocks, and put them in his pocket.

"Fortune is as good as red gold, but a new, charming story would be better still," thought the man; but he could not find it here.

And the sun went down, round and large; the meadow was covered with vapor: the Moor-woman was at her brewing.

It was evening; he stood alone in his room, and looked out upon the sea, over the meadow, over moor and coast. The moon shone bright, a mist was over the meadow, making it look like a great lake; and, indeed, it was once so, as the legend tells — and in the moonlight the eye realizes these myths.

Then the man thought of what he had been reading in the town, that William Tell and Holger Danske never really lived, but yet live in, popular story, like the lake yonder, a living evidence for such myths. Yes, Holger Danske will return again!

As he stood thus and thought, something beat quite strongly against the window. Was it a bird, a bat, or an owl? Those are not let in, even when they knock. The window flew open of itself, and an old woman looked in at the man.

"What's your pleasure?" said he. "Who are you? You're looking in at the first floor window. Are you standing on a ladder?"

"You have a four-leaved shamrock in your pocket," she replied. "Indeed, you have seven, and one of them is a six-leaved one."

"Who are you?" asked the man again.

"The Moor-woman," she replied. "The Moor-woman who brews. I was at it. The bung was in the cask, but one of the little moor-imps pulled it out in his mischief, and flung it up into the yard, where it beat against the window; and now the beer's running out of the cask, and that won't do good to anybody."

"Pray tell me some more!" said the man.

"Yes, wait a little," answered the Moor-woman." "I've something else to do just now." And she was gone. The man was going to shut the window, when the woman already stood before him again.

"Now it 's done," she said; "but I shall have half the beer to brew over again to-morrow, if the weather is suitable. Well, what have you to ask me? I've come back, for I always keep my word, and you have seven four-leaved shamrocks in

your pocket, and one of them is a six-leaved one. That inspires respect, for that's an order that grows beside the sandy way; but that every one does not find. What have you to ask me? Don't stand there like a ridiculous oaf, for I must go back again directly to my bung and my cask."

And the man asked about the story, and inquired if the Moor-woman had met it in her journeyings.

"By the big brewing-vat!" exclaimed the woman; "haven't you got stories enough? I really believe that most people have enough of them. Here are other things to take notice of — other things to examine. Even the children have gone beyond that. Give the little boy a cigar, and the little girl a new crinoline; they like that much better. To listen to stories! No, indeed, there are more important things to be done here, and other things to notice!"

"What do you mean by that?" asked the man; "and what do you know of the world? You don't see anything but frogs and will-o'-the-wisps!"

"Yes, beware of the will-o'-the-wisps," said the moor-woman, "for they're out — they're let loose — that's what we must talk about! Come to me in the moor, where my presence is necessary, and I will tell you all about it; but you must make haste, and come while your seven four-leaved shamrocks, of which one has six leaves, are still fresh, and the moon stands high!"

And the Moor-woman was gone.

It struck twelve in the town, and before the last stroke had died away, the man was out in the yard, out in the garden, and stood in the meadow. The mist had vanished, and the Moor-woman stopped her brewing.

"You've been a long time coming!" said the Moor-woman. "Witches get forward faster than men, and I'm glad that I belong to the witch folk!"

"What have you to say to me now?" asked the man. "Is it anything about the story?"

"Can you never get beyond asking about that?" retorted the woman.

"Can you tell me anything about the poetry of the future?" resumed the man.

"Don't get on your stilts," said the crone, "and I'll answer you. You think of nothing but poetry, and only ask about that Story, as if she were the lady of the whole troop. She 's the oldest of us all, but she takes precedence of the youngest. I know her well. I've been young, too, and she is no chicken now. I was once quite a pretty elf-maiden, and have danced in my time with the others in the moonlight, and have heard the nightingale, and have gone into the forest and met the story-maiden, who was always to be found out there, running about. Sometimes she took up her night's lodging in a half-blown tulip, or in a field flower; sometimes she would slip into the church, and wrap herself in the mourning crape that hung down from the candles on the altar."

"You are capitally well-informed," said the man.

"I ought at least to know as much as you," answered the Moor-woman. "Stories and poetry — yes, they're like two yards of the same piece of stuff: they can go and lie down where they like, and one can brew all their prattle, and have it all the better and cheaper. You shall have it from me for nothing. I've a whole cupboardful of poetry, in bottles. It makes essences; and that's the best of it — bitter and sweet herbs. I have everything that people want of poetry, in bottles, so that I can put a little on my handkerchief, on holidays, to smell."

"Why, these are wonderful things that you're telling!" said the man. "You have poetry in bottles?"

"More than you can require," said the woman. "I suppose you know the history of 'The Girl who trod on the Loaf, so that she might not soil her Shoes?' That has been written, and printed too."

"I told that story myself," said the man.

"Yes, then you must know it; and you must know also that the girl sank into the earth directly, to the Moor-woman, just as Old Bogey's grandmother was paying her a morning visit to inspect the brewery. She saw the girl gliding down, and asked to have her as a remembrance of her visit, and got her too; while I received a present that's of no use to me — a travelling druggist's shop — a whole cupboardful of poetry in bottles. Grandmother told me where the cupboard was to be

placed, and there it 's standing still. Just look ! You've your seven four-leaved shamrocks in your pocket, one of which is a six-leaved one, and so you will be able to see it."

And really, in the midst of the moor lay something like a great knotted block of alder, and that was the old grandmother's cupboard. The Moor-woman said that this was always open to her and to every one in the land, if they only knew where the cupboard stood. It could be opened either at the front or at the back, and at every side and corner — a perfect work of art, and yet only an old alder stump in appearance. The poets of all lands, and especially those of our own country, had been arranged here ; the spirit of them had been extracted, refined, criticised, and renovated, and then stored up in bottles. With what may be called great aptitude, if it was not genius, the grandmother had taken as it were the flavor of this and of that poet, and had added a little devilry, and then corked up the bottles for use during all future times.

"Pray let me see," said the man.

"Yes, but there are more important things to hear," replied the Moor-woman.

"But now we are at the cupboard !" said the man. And, he looked in. "Here are bottles of all sizes. What is in this one? and what in that one yonder ?"

"Here is what they call may-balm," replied the woman: "I have not tried it myself. But I have not yet told you the 'more important' thing you were to hear. THE WILL-O'-THE-WISP IS IN THE TOWN ! That's of much more consequence than poetry and stories. I ought, indeed, to hold my tongue ; but there must be a necessity — a fate — a something that sticks in my throat, and that wants to come out. Take care, you mortals !"

"I don't understand a word of all this !" cried the man.

"Be kind enough to seat yourself on that cupboard," she retorted, "but take care you don't fall through and break the bottles — you know what's inside them. I must tell of the great event. It occurred no longer ago than the day before yesterday. It did not happen earlier. It has now three hundred and sixty-three days to run about. I suppose you know how many days there are in a year ?"

And this is what the Moor-woman told: —

"There was a great commotion yesterday out here in the marsh! There was a christening feast! A little Will-o'-the-Wisp was born here — in fact, twelve of them were born all together; and they have permission, if they choose to use it, to go abroad among men, and to move about and command among them, just as if they were born mortals. That was a great event in the marsh, and accordingly all the Will-o'-the-Wisps, male and female, went dancing like little lights across the moor. There are some of them of the dog species, but those are not worth mentioning. I sat there on the cupboard and had all the twelve little new-born Will-o'-the-Wisps upon my lap: they shone like glow-worms; they already began to hop, and increased in size every moment, so that before a quarter of an hour had elapsed, each of them looked just as large as his father or his uncle. Now it 's an old established regulation and favor, that when the moon stands just as it did yesterday, and the wind blows just as it blew then, it is allowed and accorded to all Will-o'-the-Wisps — that is, to all those who are born at that minute of time — to become mortals, and individually to exert their power for the space of one year.

"The Will-o'-the-Wisp may run about in the country and through the world, if it is not afraid of falling into the sea, or of being blown out by a heavy storm. It can enter into a person, and speak for him, and make all the movements it pleases. The Will-o'-the-Wisp may take whatever form he likes, of man or woman, and can act in their spirit and in their disguise, in such a way that he can effect whatever he wishes to do. But he must manage, in the course of the year, to lead three hundred and sixty-five people into a bad way, and in a grand style, too; to lead them away from the right and the truth; and then he reaches the highest point. Such Will-o'-the-Wisps can attain to the honor of being a runner before the devil's state-coach; and then he'll wear clothes of fiery yellow, and breathe forth flames out of his throat. That's enough to make a simple Will-o'-the-Wisp smack his lips. But there's some danger in this, and a great deal of work for a Will-o'-the-Wisp who aspires to play so distinguished a part.

If the eyes of the man are opened to what he is, and if the man can then blow him away, it's all over with him, and he must come back into the marsh; or if, before the year is up, the Will-o'-the-Wisp is seized with a longing to see his family, and so returns to it and gives the matter up, it is over with him likewise, and he can no longer burn clear, and soon becomes extinguished, and cannot be lit up again; and when the year has elapsed, and he has not led three hundred and sixty-five people away from the truth and from all that is grand and noble, he is condemned to be imprisoned in decayed wood, and to lie glimmering there without being able to move; and that's the most terrible punishment that can be inflicted on a lively Will-o'-the-Wisp.

"Now, all this I know, and all this I told to the twelve little Will-o'-the-Wisps whom I had on my lap, and who seemed quite crazy with joy.

"I told them that the safest and the most convenient course was to give up the honor, and do nothing at all; but the little flames would not agree to this, and already fancied themselves clad in fiery yellow clothes, breathing flames from their throats.

"'Stay with us,' said some of the older ones.

"'Carry on your sport with mortals,' said the others.

"'The mortals are drying up our meadows; they've taken to draining. What will our successors do?'

"'We want to flame; we will flame — flame!' cried the new-born Will-o'-the-Wisps.

"And thus the affair was settled.

"And now a ball was given, a minute long; it could not well be shorter. The little elf-maidens whirled round three times with the rest, that they might not appear proud, but they preferred dancing with one another.

"And now the sponsors' gifts were presented, and presents were thrown them. These presents flew like pebbles across the sea-water. Each of the elf-maidens gave a little piece of her veil.

"'Take that,' they said, 'and then you'll know the higher dance, the most difficult turns and twists — that is to say, if you should find them necessary. You'll know the proper de-

portment, and then you can show yourself in the very pick of society.'

"The night raven taught each of the young Will-o'-the-Wisps to say, 'Goo — goo — good,' and to say it in the right place; and that's a great gift, which brings its own reward.

"The owl and the stork — But they said it was not worth mentioning, and so we won't mention it.

"*King Waldemar's wild chase* was just then rushing over the moor, and when the great lords heard of the festivities that were going on they sent a couple of handsome dogs which hunt on the spoom of the wind, as a present; and these might carry two or three of the Will-o'-the-Wisps. A couple of old Alpas, spirits who occupy themselves with Alp-pressing, were also at the feast; and from these the young Will-o'-the-Wisps learned the art of slipping through every key-hole as if the door stood open before them. These Alpas offered to carry the youngsters to the town, with which they were well acquainted. They usually rode through the atmosphere on their own back hair, which is fastened into a knot, for they love a hard seat; but now they sat sideways on the wild hunting dogs, took the young Will-o'-the-Wisps in their laps, who wanted to go into the town to mislead and entice mortals, and, whisk! away they were. Now this is what happened last night. To-day the Will-o'-the-Wisps are in the town, and have taken the matter in hand — but where and how? Ah, can you tell me that? Still, I've a lightning conductor in my great toe, and that will always tell me something."

"Why, this is a complete story," exclaimed the man.

"Yes, but it is only the beginning," replied the woman. "Can you tell me how the Will-o'-the-Wisps deport themselves, and how they behave? and in what shapes they have aforetime appeared and led people into crooked paths?"

"I believe," replied the man, "that one could tell quite a romance about the Will-o'-the-Wisps, in twelve parts; or, better still, one might make quite a popular play of them."

"You might write that," said the woman, "but it 's best let alone."

"Yes, that's better and more agreeable," the man replied,

"for then we shall escape from the newspapers, and not be tied up by them, which is just as uncomfortable as for a Will-o'-the-Wisp to lie in decaying wood, to have to gleam, and not be able to stir."

"I don't care about it either way," cried the woman. "Let the rest write, those who can, and those who cannot likewise. I'll give you an old bung from my cask, that will open the cupboard where poetry is kept in bottles, and you may take from that whatever may be wanting. But you, my good man, seem to have blotted your hands sufficiently with ink, and to have come to that age of satiety, that you need not be running about every year for stories, especially as there are much more important things to be done. You must have understood what is going on?"

"The Will-o'-the-Wisp is in the town," said the man. "I've heard it, and I have understood it. But what do you think I ought to do? I should be thrashed if I were to go to the people and say, 'Look: yonder goes a Will-o'-the-Wisp in his best clothes!'"

"They also go in undress," replied the woman. "The Will-o'-the-Wisp can assume all kinds of forms and appear in every place. He goes into the church, but not for the sake of the service; and perhaps he may enter into one or other of the priests. He speaks in the Parliament, not for the benefit of the country, but only for himself. He's an artist with the color-pot as well as in the theatre, but when he gets all the power into his own hands, then the pot 's empty! I chatter and chatter, but it must come out, what's sticking in my throat, to the disadvantage of my own family. But I must now be the woman that will save a good many people. It is not done with my good-will, or for the sake of a medal. I do the most insane things I possibly can, and then I tell a poet about it, and thus the whole town gets to know of it directly."

"The town will not take that to heart," observed the man; "that will not disturb a single person; for they will all think I'm only telling them a story if I say, 'The-Will-o'-the-Wisp is in the town, says the Moor-woman. Take care of yourselves!'"

THE STORY OF A MOTHER.

A MOTHER sat by her little child: she was very sorrowful, and feared that it would die. Its little face was pale, and its eyes were closed. The child drew its breath with difficulty, and sometimes so deeply as if it were sighing; and then the mother looked more sorrowfully than before on the little creature.

Then there was a knock at the door, and a poor old man came in, wrapped up in something that looked like a great horse-cloth, for that keeps warm; and he required it, for it was cold winter. Without, everything was covered with ice and snow, and the wind blew so sharply that it cut one's face.

And as the old man trembled with cold, and the child was quiet for a moment, the mother went and put some beer on the stove in a little pot, to warm it for him. The old man sat down and rocked the cradle, and the mother seated herself on an old chair by him, looked at her sick child that drew its breath so painfully, and seized the little hand.

"You think I shall keep it, do you not?" she asked. "The good God will not take it from me!"

And the old man — he was *Death* — nodded in such a strange way, that it might just as well mean *yes* as *no*. And the mother cast down her eyes, and tears rolled down her cheeks. Her head became heavy: for three days and three nights she had not closed her eyes; and now she slept, but only for a minute; then she started up and shivered with cold.

"What is that?" she asked, and looked round on all sides; but the old man was gone, and her little child was gone; he had taken it with him. And there in the corner the old clock was humming and whirring; the heavy leaden weight ran down to the floor — plump! — and the clock stopped.

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But the poor mother rushed out of the house crying for her child.

Out in the snow sat a woman in long black garments, and she said, "Death has been with you in your room; I saw him hasten away with your child: he strides faster than the wind, and never brings back what he has taken away."

"Only tell me which way he has gone," said the mother. "Tell me the way, and I will find him."

"I know him," said the woman in the black garments; "but before I tell you, you must sing me all the songs that you have sung to your child. I love those songs; I have heard them before. I am Night, and I saw your tears when you sang them."

"I will sing them all, all!" said the mother. "But do not detain me, that I may overtake him, and find my child."

But Night sat dumb and still. Then the mother wrung her hands, and sang and wept. And there were many songs, but yet more tears, and then Night said, "Go to the right into the dark fir wood; for I saw Death take that path with your little child."

Deep in the forest there was a cross road, and she did not know which way to take. There stood a Blackthorn Bush, with not a leaf nor a blossom upon it; for it was in the cold winter time, and icicles hung from the twigs.

"Have you not seen Death go by, with my little child?"

"Yes," replied the Bush, "but I shall not tell you which way he went unless you warm me on your bosom. I'm freezing to death here; I'm turning to ice."

And she pressed the Blackthorn Bush to her bosom, quite close, that it might be well warmed. And the thorns pierced into her flesh, and her blood oozed out in great drops. But the Blackthorn shot out fresh green leaves, and blossomed in the dark winter night: so warm is the heart of a sorrowing mother! And the Blackthorn Bush told her the way that she should go.

Then she came to a great Lake, on which there were neither ships nor boat. The Lake was not frozen enough to carry her, nor sufficiently open to allow her to wade through, and yet she must cross it if she was to find her child. Then she

laid herself down to drink the Lake; and that was impossible for any one to do. But the sorrowing mother thought that perhaps a miracle might be wrought.

"No, that can never succeed," said the Lake. "Let us rather see how we can agree. I'm fond of collecting pearls, and your eyes are the two clearest I have ever seen: if you will weep them out into me I will carry you over into the great green-house, where Death lives and cultivates flowers and trees; each of these is a human life."

"O, what would I not give to get my child!" said the afflicted mother; and she wept yet more, and her eyes fell into the depths of the Lake, and became two costly pearls. But the Lake lifted her up, as if she sat in a swing, and she was wafted to the opposite shore, where stood a wonderful house, miles in length. One could not tell if it was a mountain containing forests and caves, or a place that had been built. But the poor mother could not see it, for she had wept her eyes out.

"Where shall I find Death, who went away with my little child?" she asked.

"He has not arrived here yet," said an old gray-haired Woman, who was going about and watching the hot-house of Death. "How have you found your way here, and who helped you?"

"The good God has helped me," she replied. "He is merciful, and you will be merciful too. Where shall I find my little child?"

"I do not know it," said the old Woman, "and you cannot see. Many flowers and trees have faded this night, and Death will soon come and transplant them. You know very well that every human being has his tree of life, or his flower of life, just as each is arranged. They look like other plants, but their hearts beat. Children's hearts can beat too. Think of this. Perhaps you may recognize the beating of your child's heart. But what will you give me if I tell you what more you must do?"

"I have nothing more to give," said the afflicted mother. "But I will go for you to the ends of the earth."

"I have nothing for you to do there," said the old Woman,

"but you can give me your long black hair. You must know yourself that it is beautiful, and it pleases me. You can take my white hair for it, and that is always something."

"Do you ask for nothing more?" asked she. "I will give you that gladly." And she gave her beautiful hair, and received in exchange the old Woman's white hair.

And then they went into the great hot-house of Death, where flowers and trees were growing marvelously intertwined. There stood the fine hyacinths under glass bells, some quite fresh, others somewhat sickly; water snakes were twining about them, and black crabs clung tightly to the stalks. There stood gallant palm-trees, oaks, and plantains, and parsley and blooming thyme. Each tree and flower had its name; each was a human life: the people were still alive, one in China, another in Greenland, scattered about in the world. There were great trees thrust into little pots, so that they stood quite crowded, and were nearly bursting the pots; there was also many a little weakly flower in rich earth, with moss round about it, cared for and tended. But the sorrowful mother bent down over all the smallest plants, and heard the human heart beating in each, and out of millions she recognized that of her child.

"That is it!" she cried, and stretched out her hands over a little crocus flower, which hung down quite sick and pale.

"Do not touch the flower," said the old dame; "but place yourself here; and when Death comes — I expect him every minute — then don't let him pull up the plant, but threaten him that you will do the same to the other plants; then he'll be frightened. He has to account for them all; not one may be pulled up till he receives commission from Heaven."

And all at once there was an icy cold rush through the hall, and the blind mother felt that Death was arriving.

"How did you find your way hither?" said he. "How have you been able to come quicker than I?"

"I am a mother," she answered.

And Death stretched out his long hands toward the little delicate flower; but she kept her hands tight about it, and held it fast; and yet she was full of anxious care lest he should touch one of the leaves. Then Death breathed upon

her hands, and she felt that his breath was colder than the icy wind; and her hands sank down powerless.

"You can do nothing against me," said Death.

"But the merciful God can," she replied.

"I only do what He commands," said Death. "I am his gardener. I take all his trees and flowers, and transplant them into the great Paradise gardens, in the unknown land. But how they will flourish there, and how it is there, I may not tell you."

"Give me back my child," said the mother; and she implored and wept. All at once she grasped two pretty flowers with her two hands, and called to Death, "I'll tear off all your flowers, for I am in despair."

"Do not touch them," said Death. "You say you are so unhappy, and now you would make another mother just as unhappy!"

"Another mother?" said the poor woman; and she let the flowers go.

"There are your eyes for you," said Death. "I have fished them up out of the Lake; they gleamed up quite brightly. I did not know that they were yours. Take them back — they are clearer now than before — and then look down into the deep well close by. I will tell you the names of the two flowers you wanted to pull up, and you will see what you were about to frustrate and destroy."

And she looked down into the well, and it was a happiness to see how one of them became a blessing to the world, how much joy and gladness she diffused around her. And the woman looked at the life of the other, and it was made up of care and poverty, misery and woe.

"Both are the will of God," said Death.

"Which of them is the flower of misfortune, and which the blessed one?" she asked.

"That I may not tell you," answered Death; "but this much you shall hear, that one of these two flowers is that of your child. It was the fate of your child that you saw — the future of your own child."

Then the mother screamed aloud for terror.

"Which of them belongs to my child? Tell me that!

Release the innocent child! Let my child free from all that misery! Rather carry it away! Carry it into God's kingdom! Forget my tears, forget my entreaties, and all that I have done!"

"I do not understand you," said Death. "Will you have your child back, or shall I carry it to that place that you know not?"

Then the mother wrung her hands, and fell on her knees, and prayed to the good God.

"Hear me not when I pray against Thy will, which is at all times the best! Hear me not! hear me not!" And she let her head sink down on her bosom.

And Death went away with her child into the unknown land.

WHICH WAS THE HAPPIEST?

"WHAT beautiful roses!" said the Sunshine. "And each bud will soon shoot forth, and become just as handsome. They are my children! I have kissed them into life!"

"Nay, they are my children!" said the Dew. "I have suckled them with my tears."

"Indeed they are not; I am their mother!" said the Rose-bush. "Thou and the Sunshine are but sponsors, who gave godmother's gifts according to your means and good-will."

"My beautiful children!" they all three exclaimed, and wished each blossom the greatest fortune; but only one could be most happy, and one had to be least happy: but which of them?

"That I will ascertain!" said the Wind. "I roam wildly about, I penetrate the narrowest chinks, I know everything both within and without!"

Every blown rose heard these words; every swelling bud perceived them.

Just then a sorrowful, affectionate mother, clad in mourning, chanced to walk through the garden. She plucked one of the roses which was only half-blown, yet fresh and full. This seemed to her to be the loveliest of them all. She took the rose to her quiet, silent chamber, where a few days ago her young, bright, and joyous daughter had been moving nimbly and merrily up and down; but now, alas! lay like a sleeping marble image, in the black coffin. The mother kissed her departed child; then she kissed the half blown rose, and laid it on the bosom of the young girl, half hoping that by its freshness, and by the kiss of a loving mother, the heart of her dear child might perhaps again begin to beat.

The Rose seemed to swell; each leaf quivered with joy. "What a road of love," it said, "has been granted unto me to walk! I am become like the child of a human being; I

receive a mother's kiss ; I hear the words of blessing, and enter into the unknown realm of bliss, dreaming at the bosom of the pale angel! In truth, I am become the happiest of all of us sisters!"

In the garden where the Rose-bush stood, an old woman was walking, who had been employed to weed the garden. She also gazed upon the splendid bush, and kept her eyes upon the largest fully developed rose. Only a dew-drop, and one hot day more, and the leaves would come off. This the old woman saw, and she said that the rose had lived long enough for beauty ; now it should also, she meant, be of some practical use. So she plucked it, wrapped it up in an old newspaper, and took it home to the other pale and faded roses, to be pickled, to be *potpourri*, to go into company with the little blue boys named lavenders, and to be embalmed with salt. Understand, to be embalmed, — that is an honor only granted to roses and royal persons.

"I am the most honored!" said the Rose, when the weeding woman took it home. "I am the happiest ; I am going to be embalmed."

Now two young men were promenading in the garden. One was a Painter, the other was a Poet. Each of them plucked a rose, beautiful to behold. The Painter represented on the canvas an image of the blooming Rose, an image so perfectly beautiful, that the Rose itself supposed that it was looking in the glass.

"Thus," said the Painter, "this Rose shall live through many succeeding generations, in which millions on millions of roses wither and die."

"Ah! I became, after all, the most favored!" said this Rose ; "I had the best fortune!"

Now the Poet looked at his rose, — wrote a poem on it in loving, mysterious terms. Indeed, it was a whole pictorial book of love which he wrote ; it was an immortal piece of poetry.

"By this book I have become immortal," said the Rose. "I am the most fortunate!"

However, in the very midst of all this splendor of roses, there was one almost hidden by the others. Accidentally, perhaps fortunately, it had a little deformity, sat a little obliquely

on the stock, and on one side the leaves did not correspond to those on the opposite side; indeed, in the midst of the blossom itself even, a little green crippled leaf was about to grow up. Such things happen now and then, even to roses.

"Poor child!" said the Wind, kissing its cheek. The Rose believed this kissing to be a greeting and homage. It had an idea of being formed somewhat differently from the other roses, and that a green leaf was about to grow up in its very centre, and this it considered an ornament. A butterfly flew down and kissed its leaves. Now the butterfly was a wooer, but the Rose discarded him. Then came an immensely big grasshopper. However, he seated himself on another rose, and rubbed his shinbone, which, strange to say, is a token of love amongst grasshoppers. The Rose on which he was seated did not understand it, but that with the green, crippled leaf, did; for upon her the big grasshopper looked with eyes that plainly said: "I could eat thee from mere love!" And this is indeed the highest point which love can reach, when one is absorbed in the other! But the Rose resisted, and would by no means be absorbed in the jumping dandy. Now a nightingale began to sing in the moonlight night.

"This singing is only in honor of me; I am serenaded!" said the Rose with the deformity, or with the ornament, as she believed it to be. "Why am I thus to be distinguished in preference to all my sisters? Why did I receive this deformity, I mean this ornament, which makes me the most lucky?"

Now two cigar-smoking gentlemen appeared in the garden. They spoke of roses and of tobacco. Roses are said not to be able to endure tobacco smoke; they fade, become greenish. It was to be tested. But the modest gentlemen could not persuade themselves to take one of the very finest roses; they took that with the deformity.

"Indeed, one more honor!" said the Rose. "I am fortunate in the extreme! Much more so than any of my sisters!"

But in the midst of this self-conceit and tobacco smoke, she became greenish yellow.

One rose, still half bud, but perhaps the most beautiful on the bush, was given a place of honor in the gardener's elegant bouquet. It was brought to the young, haughty lord of the

house, and rode with him in his fine cabriolet. It paraded in all its beauty amongst other fragrant flowers; it shared the splendid festivities of the house. Men and women sat gorgeously dressed, lighted by a thousand lamps; the music sounded; the theatre was brilliantly illuminated, as if it were an ocean of brightness; and when the young danseuse, in the midst of stormy applause, appeared on the stage, bouquet after bouquet flew like a rain of flowers before her feet. There the bouquet fell in which the beautiful rose paraded like a diamond star. It felt its whole indescribable happiness; it felt the honor and splendor by which it was surrounded, and when touching the flour it also danced; it leaped for joy, it rushed over the stage so that its stem broke off. The young danseuse did not get it, for it rolled swiftly behind the coulisses, where a servant took it up, saw how beautiful and fragrant it was, pocketed it, and when he got home put it into a wine-glass filled with water, where it lay all the night. Early in the morning it was placed before his grandmother, who sat, feeble with age, in her arm-chair. She looked upon the stemless but beautiful rose, delighted in it and in its fragrance.

"Thou wast not placed upon a rich and fashionable lady's table," she said, "but thou camest to a poor old woman. How beautiful thou art!"

And with child-like joy she looked upon the blossom, no doubt thinking of her own blooming youth which now had passed away.

"The pane was cracked," said the Wind. "I got easily in, saw the old woman's youthful bright eyes, and the stemless, yet beautiful Rose in the wine-glass. Indeed, the happiest of them all! I know it! I can tell it!"

Each rose on the bush in the garden had its own history. Each rose believed, and thought itself the happiest, and it is faith that makes us happy. Yet the last Rose believed itself the very happiest. "I survive them all," it said; "I am the last, the only one, mother's dearest child!"

"And I am the mother of all of them," said the Rose-bush.

"No, *I* am!" said the Sunshine.

"And *I*!" said the Dew.

"Each has a part in it!" the Wind finally said; "and each

shall have a part of it!" and then the Wind strewed its leaves out over the hedge where the dew-drops lay, and where the sun was shining. "I got also my part," said the Wind, "for I got the history of all the roses which I will launch into the wide world! Tell me, then: Which was most happy of them all? That thou must tell, Sunshine, for I think I have said enough!"

THE DROP OF WATER.

SURELY you know what a microscope is — that wonderful glass which makes everything appear a hundred times larger than it really is. If you look through a microscope at a single drop of ditch-water, you will perceive more than a thousand strange-shaped creatures, such as you never could imagine dwelling in the water. It looks not unlike a plateful of shrimps, all jumping and crowding upon each other; and so ferocious are these little creatures, and they will tear off each other's arms and legs without mercy; and yet they are happy and merry after their fashion.

Now there was once an old man, whom all his neighbors called Cribbley Crabbley, — a curious name to be sure! He always liked to make the best of everything, and, when he could not manage it otherwise, he tried magic.

So one day he sat with his microscope held up to his eye, looking at a drop of ditch-water. O, what a strange sight was that! All the thousand little imps in the water were jumping and springing about, and devouring each other, or pulling each other to pieces.

"Upon my word, this is too horrible!" quoth old Cribbley Crabbley; "there must surely be some means of making them live in peace and quiet." And he thought and thought, but still could not hit on the right expedient. "I must give them a color," he said at last; "then I shall be able to see them more distinctly." And accordingly he let fall into the water a tiny drop of something that looked like red wine, but in reality it was witches' blood; whereupon all the strange little creatures immediately became red all over, not unlike the Red Indians; the drop of water now seemed a whole townful of naked wild men.

"What have you there?" inquired another old magician, who had no name at all, which made him more remarkable even than Cribbley Crabbley.

"Well, if you can guess what it is," replied Cribbley Crabbley, "I will give it you ; but I warn you, you'll not find it out so easily."

And the magician without a name looked through the microscope. The scene now revealed to his eyes actually resembled a town where all the inhabitants were running about without clothing ; it was a horrible sight ! But still more horrible was it to see how they kicked and cuffed, struggled and fought, pulled and bit each other. All those that were lowest must needs strive to get uppermost, and all those that were highest must be thrust down. "Look, look !" they seemed to be crying out, "his leg is longer than mine ; pah ! off with it ! And there is one who has a little lump behind his ear, — an innocent little lump enough, but it pains him, and it shall pain him more !" And they hacked at it, and seized hold of him, and devoured him, merely because of this little lump. Only one of the creatures was quiet, very quiet, and still ; it sat by itself, like a little modest damsel, wishing for nothing but peace and rest. But the others would not have it so ; they pulled the little damsel forward, cuffed her, cut at her, and ate her.

"This is most uncommonly amusing," remarked the nameless magician.

"Do you think so ? Well, but what is it ?" asked Cribbley Crabbley. "Can you guess, or can you not ? — that's the question."

"To be sure I can guess," was the reply of the nameless magician, "easy enough. It is either Copenhagen or some other large city ; I don't know which, for they are all alike. It is some large city."

"It is a drop of ditch-water !" said Cribbley Crabbley.

THE DROP OF WATER. See page 471.

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP

HAVE you ever seen a very, very old clothes-press, quite black with age, on which all sorts of flourishes and foliage were carved? Just such a one stood in a certain room. It was a legacy from a grandmother, and it was carved from top to bottom with roses and tulips; the most curious flourishes were to be seen on it, and between them little stags popped out their heads with zigzag antlers. But on the top a whole man was carved. True, he was laughable to look at; for he showed his teeth, — laughing one could not call it, — had goat's legs, little horns on his head, and a long beard. The children in the room always called him General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent Goatslegs, for this was a name difficult to pronounce, and there are very few who get the title; but to cut him out in wood — that was no trifle. However, there he was. He looked down upon the table and toward the mirror, for there a charming little porcelain Shepherdess was standing. Her shoes were gilded, her gown was tastefully looped up with a red rose, and she had a golden hat and cloak; in short, she was most exquisite. Close by stood a little Chimney-sweep, as black as a coal, but of porcelain too. He was just as clean and pretty as another; as to his being a sweep, that was only what he represented; and the porcelain manufacturer could just as well have made a prince of him as a chimney-sweep, if he had chosen; one was as easy as the other.

There he stood so prettily with his ladder, and with a little round face as fair and as rosy as that of the Shepherdess. In reality this was a fault; for a little black he certainly ought to have been. He was quite close to the Shepherdess; both stood where they had been placed; and as soon as they were put there, they had mutually promised each other eternal fidelity; for they suited each other exactly — they were young, they were of the same porcelain, and both equally fragile.

Close to them stood another figure three times as large as they were. It was an old Chinese, that could nod his head. He was of porcelain too, and said that he was grandfather of the little Shepherdess ; but this he could not prove. He asserted, moreover, that he had authority over her, and that was the reason he had nodded his assent to the General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent Goatslegs, who paid his addresses to the Shepherdess.

"In him," said the old Chinese, "you will have a husband who, I verily believe, is of mahogany. You will be Mrs. Goatslegs, the wife of a General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent, who has his shelves full of plate, besides what is hidden in secret drawers and recesses."

"I will not go into the dark cupboard," said the little Shepherdess ; "I have heard say that he has eleven wives of porcelain in there already."

"Then you may be the twelfth," said the Chinese. "To-night, as soon as the old clothes-press cracks, as sure as I am a Chinese, we will keep the wedding." And then he nodded his head, and fell asleep.

But the little Shepherdess wept, and looked at her beloved — at the porcelain Chimney-sweep.

"I implore you," said she, "fly hence with me ; for here it is impossible for us to remain."

"I will do all you ask," said the little Chimney-sweep. "Let us leave this place. I think my trade will enable me to support you."

"If we were only down from the table," said she. "I shall not be happy till we are far from here, and free."

He consoled her, and showed her how she was to set her little foot on the carved border and on the gilded foliage which twined around the leg of the table, brought his ladder to her assistance, and at last both were on the floor ; but when they looked toward the old clothes-press, they observed a great stir. All the carved stags stretched their heads out farther, raised their antlers, and turned round their heads. The General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent gave a jump, and called to the old Chinese, "They are eloping! they are eloping!"

At this she grew a little frightened, and jumped quickly over the ridge into the drawer.

Here lay three or four packs of cards, which were not complete, and a little puppet-show, which was set up as well as it was possible to do. A play was being performed, and all the ladies, Diamonds as well as Hearts, Clubs, and Spades, sat in the front row, and fanned themselves with the tulips they held in their hands, while behind them stood the varlets. The play was about two persons who could not have each other, at which the Shepherdess wept, for it was her own history.

"I cannot bear it longer," said she; "I must get out of the drawer."

But when she had got down on the floor, and looked up to the table, she saw that the old Chinese was awake, and that his whole body was rocking.

"The old Chinese is coming!" cried the little Shepherdess; and down she fell on her porcelain knee, so frightened was she.

"A thought has struck me," said the Chimney-sweep; "let us creep into the great Pot-pourri Jar that stands in the corner; there we can lie on roses and lavender, and if he comes after us, throw dust in his eyes."

"'Tis of no use," said she. "Besides, I know that the old Chinese and the Pot-pourri Jar were once betrothed; and when one has been once on such terms, a little regard always lingers behind. No; for us there is nothing left but to wander forth into the wide world."

"Have you really courage to go forth with me into the wide world?" asked the Chimney-sweep tenderly. "Have you considered how large it is, and that we can never come back here again?"

"I have," said she.

And the Sweep gazed fixedly upon her, and then said, "My way lies up the chimney. Have you really courage to go with me through the stove, and to creep through all the flues? We shall then get into the main flue, after which I am not at a loss what to do. Up we mount, then, so high, that they can never reach us; and at the top is an opening that leads out into the world."

And he led her toward the door of the stove.

"It looks quite black," said she; but still she went with him, and on through all the intricacies of the interior, and through the flues, where a pitchy darkness reigned.

"We are now in the chimney," said she; "and behold, behold, above us is shining the loveliest star!"

It was a real star in the sky that shone straight down upon them, as if to show them the way. They climbed and they crept higher and higher. It was a frightful way; but he lifted her up, he held her, and showed her the best places on which to put her little porcelain feet; and thus they reached the top of the chimney, and seated themselves on the edge of it; for they were tired, which is not to be wondered at.

The heaven and all its stars were above them, and all the roofs of the town below them; they could see far around, far away into the world. The poor Shepherdess had never pictured it to herself thus; she leaned her little head on her Sweep, and wept so bitterly that all the gilding of her girdle came off.

"O, this is too much!" said she; "I cannot bear it. The world is too large. O, were I but again on the little table under the looking-glass! I shall never be happy till I am there again. I have followed you into the wide world; now, if you really love me, you may follow me home again."

And the Chimney-sweep spoke sensibly to her, spoke to her about the old Chinese and the General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent; but she sobbed so violently, and kissed her little Sweep so passionately, that he was obliged to give way, although it was not right to do so.

So now down they climbed again with great difficulty, crept through the flue, and into the stove, where they listened behind the door, to discover if anybody was in the room. It was quite still; they peeped, and there, on the floor, in the middle of the room, lay the old Chinese. He had fallen from the table in trying to follow the fugitives, and was broken in three pieces; his whole back was but a stump, and his head had rolled into a corner, while General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent Goatslegs was standing where he had ever stood, absorbed in thought.

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"How dreadful!" said the little Shepherdess. "My old grandfather is dashed to pieces, and we are the cause. I never can survive the accident." And she wrung her little hands in agony.

"He can be mended," said the Chimney-sweep; "he can easily be mended. Only do not be so hasty. If we glue his back together, and rivet his neck well, he will be as good as new, and will be able to say enough disagreeable things to us yet."

"Do you think so?" said she; and then they clambered up again to the table on which they had stood before.

"You see," said the Sweep, "we might have spared ourselves these disagreeables, after all."

"If we had but mended my old grandfather!" said the Shepherdess. "Does it cost much?"

And mended he was. The family had his back glued, and his neck riveted, so that he was as good as new, except that he could not nod.

"Meseems, you have grown haughty since you were dashed to pieces," said General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent Goatslegs. "However, I think there is not so very much to be proud of. Am I to have her, or am I not?"

The Chimney-sweep and the little Shepherdess looked so touchingly at the old Chinese; they feared he would nod, but he could not, and it was disagreeable to him to tell a stranger that he had constantly a rivet in his neck. So the little porcelain personages remained together. They blessed the old grandfather's rivet, and loved each other till they fell to pieces.

THE ROSE-ELF.

IN the midst of the garden grew a rose-bush, which was quite covered with roses; and in one of them, the most beautiful of all, there dwelt an elf. He was so tiny that no human eye could see him. Behind every leaf in the rose he had a bedroom. He was as well formed and beautiful as any child could be, and had wings that reached from his shoulders to his feet. O, what a fragrance there was in his rooms! and how clear and bright were the walls! They were made of the pale pink rose-leaves.

The whole day he rejoiced in the warm sunshine, flew from flower to flower, danced on the wings of the flying butterfly, and measured how many steps he would have to take to pass along all the roads and cross-roads that are marked out on a single hidden leaf. What we call veins on the leaf were to him high-roads and cross-roads. Yes, those were long roads for him! Before he had finished his journey the sun went down, for he had begun his work too late!

It became very cold, the dew fell, and the wind blew: now the best thing to be done was to come home. He made what haste he could, but the rose had shut itself up, and he could not get in; not a single rose stood open. The poor little elf was very much frightened. He had never been out at night before; he had always slumbered sweetly and comfortably behind the warm rose leaves. O, it certainly would be the death of him.

At the other end of the garden there was, he knew, an arbor of fine honeysuckle. The flowers looked like great painted horns, and he wished to go down into one of them to sleep till the next day.

He flew thither. Silence! two people were in there — a handsome young man and a young girl. They sat side by side, and wished that they need never part. They loved each other better than a good child loves its father and mother.

"Yet we must part!" said the young man. "Your brother does not like us, therefore he sends me away on an errand so far over mountains and seas. Farewell, my sweet bride, for that you shall be!"

And they kissed each other, and the young girl wept, and gave him a rose. But, before she gave it him, she impressed a kiss so firmly and closely upon it that the flower opened. Then the little elf flew into it, and leaned his head against the delicate fragrant walls. Here he could plainly hear them say "Farewell! farewell!" and he felt that the rose was placed on the young man's heart. O, how that heart beat! the little elf could not go to sleep, it thumped so.

But not long did the rose rest undisturbed on that breast. The man took it out, and as he went lonely through the wood, he kissed the flower so often and so fervently that the little elf was almost crushed. He could feel through the leaf how the man's lips burned, and the rose itself had opened, as if under the hottest noonday sun.

Then came another man, gloomy and wicked; he was the bad brother of the pretty maiden. He drew out a sharp knife, and while the other kissed the rose the bad man stabbed him to death, and then, cutting off his head, buried both head and body in the soft earth under the linden-tree.

"Now he's forgotten and gone!" thought the wicked brother; "he will never come back again. He was to have taken a long journey over mountains and seas. One can easily lose one's life, and he has lost his. He cannot come back again, and my sister dare not ask news of him from me."

Then with his feet he shuffled dry leaves over the loose earth, and went home in the dark night. But he did not go alone, as he thought; the little elf accompanied him. The elf sat in a dry, rolled-up linden leaf that had fallen on the wicked man's hair as he dug. The hat was now placed over the leaf, and it was very dark in the hat, and the elf trembled with fear and with anger at the evil deed.

In the morning hour the bad man got home; he took off his hat, and went into his sister's bedroom. There lay the beautiful blooming girl, dreaming of him whom she loved from her heart, and of whom she now believed that he was

going across the mountains and through the forests. And the wicked brother bent over her and laughed hideously, as only a fiend can laugh. Then the dry leaf fell out of his hair upon the coverlet; but he did not remark it, and he went out to sleep a little himself in the morning hour. But the elf slipped forth from the withered leaf, placed himself in the ear of the sleeping girl, and told her, as in a dream, the dreadful history of the murder; described to her the place where her brother had slain her lover and buried his corpse; told her of the blooming linden-tree close by it, and said, —

"That you may not think it is only a dream that I have told you, you will find on your bed a withered leaf."

And she found it when she awoke. O, what bitter tears she wept! The window stood open the whole day: the little elf could easily get out to the roses and all the other flowers, but he could not find it in his heart to quit the afflicted maiden. In the window stood a plant, a monthly rose-bush: he seated himself in one of the flowers, and looked at the poor girl. Her brother often came into the room, and, in spite of his wicked deed, he always seemed cheerful, but she dared not say a word of the grief that was in her heart.

As soon as the night came, she crept out of the house, went to the wood, to the place where the linden tree stood, removed the leaves from the ground, turned up the earth, and immediately found him who had been slain. O, how she wept, and prayed that she might die also!

Gladly would she have taken the corpse home with her, but that she could not do. Then she took the pale head with the closed eyes, kissed the cold mouth, and shook the earth out of the beautiful hair. "That I will keep," she said. And when she had laid earth upon the dead body, she took the head, and a little sprig of the jasmine that bloomed in the wood where he was buried, home with her.

As soon as she came into her room, she brought the greatest flower-pot she could find: in this she laid the dead man's head, strewed earth upon it, and then planted the jasmine twig in the pot.

"Farewell! farewell!" whispered the little Elf: he could endure it no longer to see all this pain, and therefore flew out

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to his rose in the garden. But the rose was faded; only a few pale leaves clung to the wild bush.

"Alas! how soon everything good and beautiful passes away!" sighed the Elf.

At last he found another rose, and this became his house; behind its delicate fragrant leaves he could hide himself and dwell.

Every morning he flew to the window of the poor girl, and she was always standing weeping by the flower-pot. The bitter tears fell upon the jasmine spray, and every day, as the girl became paler and paler, the twig stood there fresher and greener, and one shoot after another sprouted forth, little white buds burst out, and these she kissed. But the bad brother scolded his sister, and asked if she had gone mad. He could not bear it, and could not imagine why she was always weeping over the flower-pot. He did not know what closed eyes were there, what red lips had there faded into earth. And she bowed her head upon the flower-pot, and the little Elf of the rose bush found her slumbering there. Then he seated himself in her ear, told her of the evening in the arbor, of the fragrance of the rose, and the love of the elves. And she dreamed a marvelously sweet dream, and while she dreamed her life passed away. She had died a quiet death, and she was in heaven, with him whom she loved.

And the jasmine opened its great white bells. They smelt quite peculiarly sweet; it could not weep in any other way over the dead one.

But the wicked brother looked at the beautiful blooming plant, and took it for himself as an inheritance, and put it in his sleeping-room, close by his bed, for it was glorious to look upon, and its fragrance was sweet and lovely. The little Rose-elf followed, and went from flower to flower — for in each dwelt a little soul — and told of the murdered young man, whose head was now earth beneath the earth, and told of the evil brother and of the poor sister.

"We know it!" said each soul in the flowers; "we know it: have we not sprung from the eyes and lips of the murdered man? We know it! we know it!"

And then they nodded in a strange fashion with their heads.

The Rose-elf could not at all understand how they could be so quiet, and he flew out to the bees that were gathering honey, and told them the story of the wicked brother. And the bees told it to their Queen, and the Queen commanded that they should all kill the murderer next morning. But in the night, — it was the first night that followed upon the sister's death, — when the brother was sleeping in his bed, close to the fragrant jasmine, each flower opened, and invisible, but armed with poisonous spears, the flower-souls came out and seated themselves in his ear, and told him bad dreams, and then flew across his lips and pricked his tongue with the poisonous spears.

"Now we have avenged the dead man!" they said, and flew back into the jasmine's white bells.

When the morning came and the windows of the bedchamber were opened, the Rose-elf and the Queen Bee and the whole swarm of bees rushed in to kill him.

But he was dead already. People stood around his bed, and said, "The scent of the jasmine has killed him!" Then the Rose-elf understood the revenge of the flowers, and told it to the Queen and to the bees, and the Queen hummed with the whole swarm around the flower-pot. The bees were not to be driven away. Then a man carried away the flower-pot, and one of the bees stung him in the hand, so that he let the pot fall, and it broke in pieces.

Then they beheld the whitened skull, and knew that the dead man on the bed was a murderer.

And the Queen Bee hummed in the air, and sang of the revenge of the bees, and of the Rose-elf, and said that behind the smallest leaf there dwells ONE who can bring the evil to light, and repay it.

THE BUTTERFLY.

THE Butterfly wanted a sweetheart, and of course he would choose a pretty little darling, one of the dear little flowers. He inspected them, saw each one sitting on her stalk, quiet and modest, as a maiden should be; but there was so many to choose among he was quite puzzled. So the Butterfly flew down to the Daisy. The French call her "Marguerite;" they know that she can tell fortunes; the way it is done is in this fashion: You pluck off the dainty little florets that form the petals one by one, asking a question about your sweetheart at each, "Does he love me from his heart? — or does he play a part? — loves he little? — loves he much? — loves he not at all?" This is the way it goes on. So the Butterfly came to ask to have his fortune told, but he would not bite off the leaves; he kissed every one in turn, thinking this would please the fortune-teller.

"Sweet Miss Margaret Daisy," he begun, "you are the wisest woman among all the flowers! You can tell fortunes! tell me, what shall I do? Shall I choose this one or that one? When you have told me which to woo, I can fly straight to her and begin."

But Marguerite answered him never a word. She did not approve of his calling her "a woman;" it sounded as if she were old, and she was unmarried, and still young. He put his question a second time, he put it a third time, and as still he could not get a single word out of her, he gave up, and flew away to speed his wooing.

It was early spring; hyacinths and crocuses grew in abundance. "Really very charming!" pronounced the Butterfly. "Neat little school-girls! but somewhat prim." For, like most very young bachelors, he preferred older maidens. So he flew down to the anemones, but they were too shy. The violets were a little too dreamy, the tulips much too dashing,

the lime-blossoms too small and were too close and exclusive in their family life; the apple-blossoms were, he must allow, like roses to look at, but then they opened one day, and, if the wind blew, fell to pieces the next; surely a union with one of them would be too brief. The Sweet Pea pleased him the most; she was red and white, dainty and piquant; she belonged to that class of comely domestic girls who are good-looking and yet useful in the kitchen. He was on the point of paying his addresses to her, when he noticed a peas-cod hanging close by, a withered flower clinging to it. "Who is that?" he asked. "My sister," replied the Sweet Pea.

"Goodness! think of you ever coming to look like that!" The Butterfly was horrified, and flew away, warned in time.

Honeysuckles clung to the hedge; he looked full at these young ladies, with their long faces and yellow complexions. No, he did not like that kind of article at all. But what did he like?

Spring passed away, summer passed away, and autumn came: he was no nearer making up his mind. Flowers now wore handsome and gorgeous dresses, but where was the good? fresh, fragrant youth was past, and fragrance becomes so precious to the heart as one grows older, and no one can say that dahlias and hollyhocks have any particular perfume. So the Butterfly sought out the Balm-mint.

"It is not exactly a flower, — it is rather all flower! it is fragrant from the root upward, with sweet scent in every leaf. Yes, I will take her!"

So, at last, he began his love-making.

But the Balm-mint stood stiff and silent, and at last replied, "Friendship, if you will, but nothing more! I am old, and you are old; we may very well live for each other, but marriage — no! let us not make fools of ourselves in our old age."

So the Butterfly got no sweetheart at all. He had looked about him too long, which is a mistake; he became an old bachelor.

It was late autumn, windy and wet; cold blew the blast down the backs of the poor shaky old willow-trees. In such weather it is not pleasant to fly about in summer clothing, out

of doors, getting one's self chilled through and through; but the Butterfly was spared that discomfort; he had chanced to fly into a room where there was a fire in the stove and the atmosphere was warm as summer. Here, he could exist; "but mere existence is not enough," he sighed; "to live, one must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower!"

So he flew to the window-pane, to take a last look at the flowers; there he was noticed, admired, captured, and set upon a needle to be stored in a museum of curiosities. More than this could not be done for him.

"Well, now I sit upon a stalk, like the flowers," quoth the Butterfly. "It is not exactly pleasant; it is very like being married, though one is kept so tight!" and he comforted himself with this reflection.

"A miserable consolation, truly!" said the flowers that lived in pots in the room.

"But one cannot quite trust the word of potted flowers," thought the Butterfly; "they have too much to do with men."

A STORY FROM THE SAND HILLS.

THIS is a Story of the Sand Hills of Jutland, but it does not begin in Jutland; on the contrary, it begins far away to the south, in Spain. The sea is, as it were, a thoroughfare between the two countries. So now fancy thyself in Spain.

It is a delicious climate! pomegranate blossoms glow like fire among the dark laurels; a fresh wind breathes from the mountains over the orange gardens and the graceful Moorish palaces with their golden cupolas and painted walls; children, carrying torches and waving banners, walk in procession through the streets, and high above them arches the clear vault of heaven with its sparkling stars. Songs and castanets are heard around thee, youths and maidens join in the dance under the blossoming acacias, whilst the beggar sits on a carved fragment of marble, slakes his thirst with a juicy water-melon, and slumbers life away. The whole is like a beautiful dream; give thyself up to it! as did the young married pair whose acquaintance is now offered thee. To these two had been granted all the choicest of earth's blessings, — health, beauty, good-humor, riches, and rank.

"Surely no one can possibly be happier than we are!" they said, in the full conviction of their hearts. And yet one blessing more awaited them; both looked eagerly forward to the time when God would give them a child; a son in their own image, body and soul. That happy child was to be welcomed with transport, tended with the utmost care and love, surrounded by all the luxuries that riches and power can command.

Meanwhile, the days glided away, each one like a festival.

"Life is a precious gift of love; almost inconceivably precious is it!" said the wife. "And then to think that this fullness of bliss shall in another life increase and grow, increase throughout eternity! I can hardly conceive it!"

"Probably that idea is only one of man's vain imaginations," replied her husband. "Really and truly, there is a terrible vanity in people's persuading themselves they will live forever, become as God — as the serpent promised in Eden: he is the father of lies."

"Surely you cannot doubt that there is a life after this?" inquired his young wife, in alarm, and for the first time a cloud seemed to overshadow her full sunshine of happiness.

"I know that our faith promises it, and that the priests affirm it," said the young man; "but, in the midst of my present happiness, I feel that there is an overweening pride in demanding another life after this, — a continuation of bliss. Is not enough given us in this present life? ought we not to be satisfied therewith?"

"O, but remember," pleaded the young wife, "to how many thousands this life is a heavy trial! how many are cast into the world to suffer poverty, shame, sickness, and misfortune! If there were no life after this, the blessings of this earth would be too unequally shared, — our God would not be a God of justice!"

"Yonder beggar has pleasures as dear to him as the king has in his splendid palace," argued the young husband. "And don't you suppose that the poor beast of burden, beaten and starved to death, has some sense of the bitterness of his lot? Might not he, too, demand a second existence? and call it injustice that immortality should not be granted to his lower rank in the creation?"

"Christ has said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions,'" replied the wife. "The Kingdom of Heaven is infinite, like God's love. I do not know how it will be, but I fully believe that no single life will be lost; that to each will be allotted the full measure of bliss it is capable of receiving."

"Well, this world is good enough for me, now at least," affirmed the man, as he twined his arm round his lovely and loving wife, and raised a cigarette to his lips. They were standing on their open balcony; the cool air was filled with the fragrance of orange blossoms and gillyflowers; songs and castanets resounded through the streets, the stars glittered on

high, and the eyes of his sweet wife gazed on him with the bright light of love. "Such a moment as this," he added, "would be worth living for, were there no more." He smiled, his wife raised her finger reprovingly, but the cloud soon passed away; they were too happy to think long on such subjects.

And everything seemed to contribute to their advantage and well-being; a change came indeed, but only a change of place, not in the power of enjoyment. The young man was sent by his king as ambassador to the Imperial court of Russia; it was an honorable post, such as his birth and talents well fitted him to occupy. He had a large fortune of his own; that of his young wife was equal to his, for she was the daughter of a rich merchant. And one of her father's largest and best ships was this year to make a voyage to Stockholm, and in this ship were they, daughter and son-in-law, to be conveyed to St. Petersburg. Everything was pleasantly and luxuriously arranged for their voyage; soft carpets for their feet, silk and splendor surrounding them.

There is an old heroic ballad well known to all Danish people; it is called "The King of England's Son." This young prince goes out to sea in a splendid ship, its anchor inlaid with red gold, and every rope woven of silken twist; and of this vessel one might be reminded in seeing the Spanish merchant's ship, for here was magnificence somewhat similar, and a similar leave-taking.

"God grant we meet with joy again!"

The parting was brief indeed, for the gale blew briskly off the Spanish coast; but no sooner were they fairly out at sea than the wind lay down to rest, the sea grew smooth, the waters glittered beneath the stars of heaven, and it was like a festal evening in their richly appointed cabin.

At last they wished the wind would rise again, to speed them on their voyage, which, if all went well, need not take longer than a few weeks; but when a gale did spring up, it was always in the wrong direction, and thus two whole months passed away before the wind was in their favor. At last it blew from the southwest, — they were now between Scotland

and Jutland, the wind now blew with a vengeance, as in the old ballad, —

> "The wind was strong, dark grew the sky,
> No land, no port of safety nigh;
> Their anchors doubtingly they cast;
> Still westward blew the furious blast."

It was long, long ago, the time of that ballad. King Christian the Seventh then sat on the Danish throne, still a young man; many things have changed since then; lake and morass have become smiling meadows, heaths converted into ploughed fields, and in the lee of the West Jutlander's hut now grow apple-trees and roses; but these must be sought out, for they hide from the sharp west winds. Still, one can easily fancy one's self back into times more remote than even Christian the Seventh's reign; in Jutland now, as then, stretches for miles the brown heath with its barrows, its mirages, its rough, winding, sandy roads; toward the west, where broad streams of water still flow into the fiords, still spreads an extent of morass bounded by high sand hills, which rise up toward the sea like an Alpine chain with jagged summits, and interrupted only by high banks of clay, wherefrom the waves bite off giant mouthfuls, year by year, so that edges and summits topple downward as though shaken by an earthquake. Such is the aspect of this country to this day; such was it also many years ago, when the happy wedded pair from Spain sailed past it in their splendid ship.

It was a Sunday late in September; it was bright, sunshiny weather; the joyous peals of the several church-bells answered one another all along the Nissum Fiord. The churches here stand like immense hewn cairn-stones, each one a fragment of rock; the German Ocean might wash over them, and they would stand firm; most of them are deficient in towers, the bells hanging out in the open air between two beams of wood. The service was over, and the congregation came out from the house of God into the church-yard, where then, as now, grew neither tree nor shurb, where neither plant, flower, nor wreath adorned the graves, little hillocks only showing where the dead lay buried, and sharp grass, beaten down by the wind, covering the whole cemetery. A solitary grave, here and there, can

boast a monument, namely, a mouldering trunk, cut in the form of a coffin: these pieces of wood come from the west; the wild sea provides the coast-dweller with many a hewn plank, dashed ashore by the storm. But the wind and the salt sea-spray soon wear away these wooden monuments. And such a memorial lay on a child's grave, up to which walked one of the women who came out of church; she stood still, gazing at the half-rotten wood, and presently her husband joined her. They spoke not a word, but he took her hand, and they walked away from the grave, — walked on over the heath, over the morass toward the sand hills. Silently they walked; at last the man said, "That was a good sermon to-day. True, if we had not our Lord, we should have nothing."

"Yes," said the wife; "He makes us glad, He sends sorrow; He has a right, we are his creatures. Our little boy would have been five years old to-morrow, if He had suffered us to keep him."

"There is no good in grieving," replied her husband. "The little fellow is better off there than here; he is where we must pray to join him."

No more was said; silently they passed on toward their home among the sand hills. Suddenly, from one of these, where there was no grass to keep down the sand, there blew up as it were a puff of smoke; it was really a blast of wind boring into the banks and whirling into the air the fine particles of sand. A second gust followed, so strong that the fish hung up in a line beat against the walls of the house, but only for a minute; then all was still again, and the sun burned warmly.

Man and wife went into the house, quickly divested themselves of their Sunday garments, and then hastened over the hills, which looked like monstrous billows of sand suddenly arrested in their motion. The sea-reed and the bluish-green of the sharp grass alone relieved the eye, wearied with the white sand. A few neighbors came out, and all helped in getting the boats higher up on the sandy shore: meantime, the wind blew stronger, it grew cuttingly cold, and as they returned across the hills, sand and sharp pebbles beat into their faces, the waves lifted their white crests, and the blast clipped off the topmost ridge, breaking it into a sand-shower.

Evening came on; the air was full of wild sound, howling, wailing, like a host of despairing spirits; the noise drowned the roar of the sea, though the fisherman's hut lay close by the shore. The sand kept beating against the window-panes, and every now and then came a shower that seemed like to bury the house beneath it. It was a dark evening; not till near midnight would the moon arise.

The atmosphere lightened, but the storm was now pressing in all its fury over the deep, black, surging sea. The fisherman and his wife had long ago laid down to rest, but in such weather it was not possible to close one's eyes. Somebody tapped at the window, the door was opened, and a voice announced, "A large vessel is well-nigh stranded on the outer reef." And man and wife were out of bed in a moment.

The moon had risen, and there would have been plenty of light only one could not keep one's eyes open for the flying sand. Only with great labor, biding their time, and creeping on a little way between the gusts, could they get across the sand-hills. And now, like swan-down in the air, flew the white salt foam from the sea, which was dashing its waves against the coast in the utmost fury. Only a practiced eye could have discerned the ship amid the tumult and uproar; it was a splendid vessel with two masts; it was exactly at this moment lifted over the reef, then it drove on toward land, struck against the second sand reef, and there stuck fast. It was impossible to lend any assistance, the sea was far too wild, the waves tossing over the vessel. You might fancy you heard the scream of terror, the cry of despair; you could see the purposeless running to and fro on board, — all was hopeless, helpless. Now came a wave like a rolling avalanche, fell upon the bowsprit, and lo! it was gone. The stern rose high above the water, two figures were seen springing from it into the sea — they vanished — a moment — and a tremendous wave rolling up toward the hills flung the body of a woman on the shore. Surely it was a corpse? but no, the poor Jutland women who gathered round her fancied she showed signs of life, and hurried her over the hills into the fisherman's cottage. She was very beautiful and delicate, evidently a lady of rank.

They laid her in the fisherman's bed; no linen had they

wherein to wrap her, only good woolen coverlets, but these were warm and comfortable. She breathed and opened her eyes, but it was in a state of high fever: she knew not where she was, or what had happened, and perhaps this was well, for he who was dearest to her lay at the bottom of the sea.

On the shore, meanwhile, it was as the ballad says, —

> "A sorrowful sight was this to all,
> The ship broke up in pieces small."

Many a fragment was floated ashore, she alone surviving of all the crew. And the wind still howled and wailed around the coast.

For a few minutes the fair stranger reposed, but then came travail-pains and screams. Her beautiful eyes opened, she spoke, but no one could understand her. At last, after all her sufferings and struggles, there nestled in her arms a little new-born child.

Alas! that child was to have rested under silken curtains, in a splendid home, was to have been welcomed with rapture; but our Lord had willed that he should be born in that miserable hut! Not so much as one kiss did he receive from his mother's lips.

For in vain had the fisherman's wife laid the baby in its mother's bosom; the heart that had yearned toward it ere it saw the light beat no longer, — she was dead. The child whom the will of its earthly parents had destined to be lapped in luxury and pleasure had been flung headlong into the world, tossed by the wild sea among the sand hills, there to experience a poor man's lot, to struggle through days of heaviness.

Here, again, we are reminded of the old song: —

> "The King's son wept, his heart was sore;
> 'O, woe for me, on this wild shore!
> Had the waves but tossed me on Bugge's strand,
> Nor knight nor squire of all his band
> Had dared against me lift a hand.'"

A little to the south of the Nissum Fiord, on the very shore that Herr Bugge once called his, the ship had been wrecked. The hard, inhuman times of the ballad, when the dwellers on the western coast dealt so cruelly toward the wrecked, were long

past, and love and pity for the unfortunate shone forth, as in our own days. The dying mother and the fatherless child would have been treated with the utmost tenderness and care, wheresoever the blast had blown them, but nowhere could they have been more kindly and generously dealt with than in the hut of that poor fisherwoman, who, only the day before, had stood with a heavy heart beside the grave where slept the child who, had God suffered him to live, would have now just completed his fifth year.

No one knew who she was, the delicate, suffering stranger, his mother, or whence she came. The waifs and strays from the ship brought no explanation.

In the house of the rich Spanish merchant never came letter or tidings from his daughter and son-in-law. They could not have reached their destination ; such violent storms had raged during the last few weeks. For months the father waited ; at last the sad truth was known : " All lost ! all perished ! "

But in the fisherman's hut near Hunsby sand hills there was now a tiny, merry infant.

Where God provides food for two, there is sure to be enough for a third, and close by the sea there is always a dish of fish, at any rate, for hungry mouths. The little one was christened Jörgen.

" Surely he must be a Jewish child ! " folk said, " he is so black ! " " He may just as easily be an Italian or a Spaniard," replied the clergyman of the parish. However, to the fisherman's wife, all three seemed very much the same, but it was a great comfort to her to be sure that, anyhow, the child was really a baptized Christian. And the boy grew and thrived, the noble blood in his veins took in warmth and nourishment from the poor fare of that lowly hut ; the Danish language, as spoken by the West Jutlander, became his language. The pomegranate-seed from Spain had become a lowly plant on Jutland's western coast, and in this home, so foreign to his nature, he took root for all his life long. Hunger and cold, a poor man's wants and troubles, was he to experience, but also the poor man's pleasures.

Childhood has, for every one, its bright points, that gleam

and sparkle through the whole after-life. And little Jörgen had his fill of play and pleasure; all those miles of coast were strewed with toys for him; it was a mosaic of pebbles, red like coral, yellow like amber, or white and round like birds' eggs; all so bright, so smooth, polished by the sea. Even the hard fish skeleton, the water-plants, dried by the wind, the long narrow sea-weed, fluttering among the stones; all these even were a delight to eye and to heart. And the boy's mind was neither inactive nor vulgar. How he could remember all the stories or old songs that he had ever heard! And so handy was he! he could make little boats with stones and shells, and pictures, such as were quite an ornament to the room; he could "cut his thoughts out wonderfully," declared his foster-mother, when he was still only a little boy, and his voice was so sweet, and caught hold of a melody so quickly. To many fine harmonies was that little heart attuned, such as might have rung out far and wide through the world, had his youth been nurtured in a less narrow home than that fisherman's hut near the German Ocean.

One day, after a shipwreck, a box full of rare bulbs drifted ashore; some were taken out and thrown into the soup, under the idea that they might be good to eat, others were left rotting in the sand; they never attained their destiny, never unfolded the glorious beauty of form and color that lay hidden within them. Would it be thus with Jörgen? It was soon all over with the flower-roots, but he had years to live and strive.

It never occurred either to him or to his companions that their lives were lonely and monotonous; there was plenty to do, to hear, and to see. The ocean itself was a large lesson-book, every day seemed to turn over a new page, either of storm or calm; a shipwreck was an event; the Sunday church-going their great festival. And a visitor they had, a welcome visitor twice a year: this was the eel-seller from Fialtring up by Bovbierg, who was brother to Jörgen's foster-mother; he came with a red painted wagon full of eels; this wagon was shut up like a box, with blue and white tulips painted on the lid; it was drawn by two grayish oxen, and Jörgen got leave to drive them.

A merry guest was the eel-man; he always brought with

him a little keg of brandy, and every one had a coffee cup full of it, — even Jörgen, little as he was, had a thimbleful given him, because it was good for him after the fat eels, the man said; and then he would take the opportunity of telling once again his old story, which, when he saw people laugh at it, he immediately told a second time, though to the same hearers. And this was the story: "Out in the river played the eels, and said Mother Eel to her daughters, when they begged leave to go alone a little way up the river, 'Don't go too far! the wicked man with his spear will come and fetch you all.' But they did go too far, and of eight daughters, only three returned home to their mother, and thus they wailed, 'We had only gone a little way beyond the door, when the ugly man with the spear came and stabbed our five sisters to death!' — 'Never mind, they will come again,' said the mother. 'No,' said the daughters, 'for he skinned them, cut them in pieces, and fried them.' — 'They will come again,' said the mother. — 'Ah, but he ate them!' — 'Still, they will come again,' repeated the mother. 'But he drank brandy afterward!" said the daughters. 'Alas! alas! then they will never come back again,' howled the mother, 'for brandy buries eels!' And just for that reason folk should always take a little brandy after eating them," moralized the eel-spearer.

Now this story was like a thread of gold tinsel running through the web of Jörgen's life, for he never forgot it, often quoted it. He, too, would fain have gone past the threshold, "a little up the river," or rather, out in a ship, into the wide world, but his foster-mother objected, as Mother Eel had objected. "There are so many wicked men with spears." A little way beyond the sand hills, a little way across the heath, that was as far as, during his childhood, he got leave to wander, and that only once. Four pleasant days, the brightest in his whole childhood, were those; a bit of Jutland's happy, homelike beauty was revealed to him when he went to the funeral, — for this occasion, a true festival to him, was really a funeral.

For a wealthy relation of the fisherman was dead; the house stood far inland, "to the east, a bit northerly," it was

said, and he and his wife would take Jörgen with them. From the sand hills, over heath and swamp, they passed to the green pasture land where the Skierum rivulet hollows out its bed, the brook full of eels, where dwelt Mother Eel and the daughters whom wicked men had speared and cut in pieces. Yet had not men oftentimes acted as cruel a part toward their fellow-men? for the good knight, Sir Niels Bugge,[1] whose name lives in legend and song, was murdered by wicked hands; and though he was himself called "good," he is said to have been near slaying the architect who built him his castle with its tower and thick walls, on the very spot where Jörgen now passed with his foster-parents, on the slope where the brook Skierum falls into the Nissum Fiord. The rampart could still be seen, and red fragments of the walls round about. It was here that the knight, Sir Niels, after the architect had departed, said to his squire, "Go thou after him, and say, 'Master, the tower leans on one side,' and if he turns and looks doubtingly, do thou slay him, and take from him the money he has had from me; but if he turn not, let him go in peace." And the squire obeyed his lord, but the architect did not turn, and his answer came clear and bold, as he replied, "The tower does not lean, for I have built it strongly, but hereafter shall come from the west one in a blue cloak, and he will cause it to lean." And a hundred years later

[1] Sir Neils Bugge of Hald revolted against King Waldemar, and was cited, in 1358, to appear before him at Nyborg. But when he reached the Little Belt, and crossed over to Middelfart, he, with two other knights, his companions, was attacked by fishermen on the shore and slain with hooks, such as were wont to be used for digging up worms. It was rumored that this crime was committed at the king's instigation, because he would fain be quit of Sir Niels; and the king had to free himself from the charge through the oath of twelve men, and the descendants of the murderers were condemned to pay yearly three marks and one skilling to the heirs of Sir Neils. The spot where the knights were murdered is said to be marked by a quantity of red cabbage, which cannot be uprooted from the soil. Sir Niels Bugge's castle at Vosborg afterward fell into the hands of Sir Hendrick Leth, a hard, cruel nobleman, who, when he died, could find no rest in his grave, but every night came driving over the drawbridge in a chariot drawn by six black horses, visited every chamber in the house, and then drove away; and this went on till the priest, Herre Skov, came and laid the ghost and restored quiet. — *Translator.*

this came to pass, for the German Ocean then broke in, and the tower fell down; but Prebiörn Gyldenstierne, who was owner of the place at that time, built on the slope higher up a new mansion, which abides to this day, and is called Nörre Vosborg.

It was a great delight to Jörgen to be shown this and other spots whereof he had heard tell during the long winter evenings. He saw the old castle, with its double moats, choked up with trees and bushes, and the rampart, overgrown with bracken. But the loveliest sight to him were the tall lime-trees that reached right up to the roof and filled the air with the sweetest odor. Toward the northwest, in a corner of the garden, stood a large bush covered with flowers as white as snow, — so strange it seemed to him amid the green leaves of summer! It was an elder-bush — the first Jörgen had seen in blossom; that and the lime-trees were put safely by in a corner of his childish mind, a bit of Denmark's beauty and fragrance, "kept to delight the old man."

And now the journey became a still greater treat. For at Nörre Vosborg, where stood the flowering elder-bush, they met other guests going to the funeral, and were invited to drive with them. Certainly, all three had to sit behind on a little wooden chest, but even that was better than walking, they thought. Away rolled the carriage over the rough hillocks of the heath, the oxen that drew it standing still every now and then, when they stumbled on a plot of fresh grass among the ling and broom. And the sun shone warmly, and how strange it was to see a wreathing smoke in the distance! so transparent, it was as though beams of light were rolling and dancing over the heath. "That is Loki driving his flock," folk said, and this was explanation enough for Jörgen; he felt as though he were being whirled into the land of legend, and yet all was real — that was the charm of it. And how still was all around him!

The heath lay outspread before them, — a wide, rich carpet; the broom was in blossom, and, mingled with the dark-green juniper and fresh oak shoots, studded the ground as it were with bouquets. One longed to throw one's self down full length, as on a soft couch, but could not for the poisonous adders

there were so many of these, it was said. And they spoke, too, of the wolves that used to be met with here so often that the district was known as Ulfborg district; and the old man who drove the wagon told how, in his father's days, the horses had often fierce battles with wild beasts now exterminated, and how, one morning, he came out and found a horse trampling on a wolf that he had slain, but the poor creature's legs were quite bare of the flesh, which had been gnawed off in the contest.

Only too quickly rolled the wagon over the rough heath, and through the deep sand. They stopped at the house of mourning; strangers were swarming in and out, wagon after wagon stood waiting, horses and oxen all turned out to seek their meagre pasture; great sand hills, like those near the sea at home, and stretching far and wide, rose at the back of the house. How came they here? twelve miles up the country, and yet as tall as those by the shore. The wind had raised them and wafted them hither; they too had a history of their own.

Psalms were sung, and a few of the old people mourned and wept: excepting this, to Jörgen everything was a pleasure. There was abundance of meat and drink; the finest eels, and brandy afterward, "to settle the eels," as the man recommended.

And Jörgen roamed in and out of the house, and by the third day he was as thoroughly at home here as in the fisherman's hut and among his own sand hills, where he had spent all his life. But the heath here was far more beautiful, with its myriads of bright blossoms, and large, sweet bilberries, clustering so thickly that one trod on them continually, staining the ground with the red juice. And the mounds, marking the graves of Jutlanders who had lived centuries ago, stood in rows almost everywhere, and the mysterious pillars of mist curled upward through the calm atmosphere in the bright evenings — they called it "the heath on fire."

But the fourth day came, and the wake was over; Jörgen must go home, must return from the inland sand hills to the coast sand hills.

"Ours are the right sort, after all!" declared the fisherman.

Then followed some talk concerning the sand hills, and how they came to be here, and this was the explanation: A corpse had been found on the shore, and the peasants buried it in the church-yard; then began the plague of flying sand, and the sea broke in with violence. At last a wise man belonging to the parish counseled that the grave of the stranger should be opened, for if he were found with his thumb in his mouth, they might then be sure that he whom they had buried was a merman, and that the sea would not be quieted till the waves had fetched him back; so they opened the grave, and there, of a truth, lay the dead man, his thumb between his lips. They carried him out on a cart, two oxen were harnessed to it, and as though stung by hornets the creatures hurried on with him over heath and moor toward the sea. Then ceased the flying sand shower; but the hills that it had formed stand there still to this day.

This was what Jörgen learnt and took away with him from the happiest days of his childhood — his four days at the wake.

O, how delightful it was, he thought, to go out into the world, to see new places and new people! But he did not find it so very delightful when, before he had completed his fourteenth year, he actually did go forth to make a cabin-boy's experience of the world. Bad weather, rough seas, and evil men, — he had these to endure now; scanty fare, cold nights, the rope's end, and blows with the fist, — these were what the world had in store for him. There was something in his Spanish blood that was continually boiling over, and bringing angry words to his lips; he learned that it was wisest to keep them down, but he felt, meanwhile, somewhat as the eel must feel when it is skinned, cut up, and thrown into the frying-pan. "But I shall come back again!" he said within himself many a time.

The vessel touched at the Spanish coast, the home of Jörgen's parents, at the very town where they had dwelt in wealth and splendor. But he knew nought of father-land or kindred, and as little did his kindred know of him. The shabby cabin-boy must stay on board while others went ashore; but on the last day it chanced that some provisions

that had been bought had to be carried on board, and Jörgen was summoned to help.

There stood Jörgen in his shabby clothes, that looked as if they had been washed in a ditch and dried in the chimney; this was the first time that he, the dweller among the sand hills, had beheld a great city. Tall houses, narrow streets, swarming with human beings, ever pressing to and fro, a regular whirlpool of townsfolk, peasantry, monks, and soldiers; there was a clamor, a screaming, a ringing of little bells from asses and mules, and of the louder bells from the churches; there was song and musical instruments, knocking and hammering, — for every mechanic seemed to make his workshop either on the threshold or in the footway — and all the while the hot sun burned and the air was so heavy! Jörgen felt as though he had got into an oven full of beetles, cockchafers, bees, and flies, all humming and buzzing with all their might; he hardly knew whether he walked on or stood still. All at once he saw before him the mighty portals of the cathedral, the lights gleamed out through the twilight of the arches, and the fragrance of incense saluted him. Even the wretched, ragged, beggar ventured to climb up those steps and enter in; the sailor who led the way chose to make a short cut through the cathedral; he entered, Jörgen followed, and stood in the sanctuary. Colored pictures beamed out from golden backgrounds; at the altar, amid flowers and lights, he beheld the Blessed Virgin, holding the Holy Child; priests were chanting in their festival robes, and pretty choir-boys swung silver censers. And all this glory and beauty streamed into Jörgen's soul, almost overpowering him; the faith of his forefathers, the church of his parents, took hold of his heart, and awakened an answering chord in his innermost soul. The tears stood in his eyes; never could he forget that sight.

From the cathedral he went on to the market. A heavy burden of eatables was laid upon him; the way was long; weary, he would fain have rested in front of a large, splendid palace, decorated with statues and marble pillars, and with broad steps leading up to the door. But as he leaned his burden against the wall out came a porter in gold lace, lifted his silver-headed cane, and drove him away, — him, the right-

ful heir of that house. But no one knew it, himself least of all.

And so he went back to the ship, and endured, as before, his portion of cuffs, short slumbers, and hard work. "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth," it is said; it is easy to say so for other folk, but how about one's self?

When the term for which he was hired was ended, and the ship anchored at Ringkiobing Fiord, he went home to Hunsby sand hills. But his foster-mother was dead — had died during his voyage.

A hard winter followed, snow-storms raging over sea and land. How differently are things apportioned in this life! such icy cold and whirling snow showers here, whilst in Spain the sun burned only too fiercely. And yet one clear frosty day, as Jörgen watched the swans flying across the Nissum Fiord toward Nörre Vosborg, he felt that here, in the northern land, he drew his breath more freely. And Denmark had its summer beauty too; in his mind's eye he saw the heath with its flowers and myriads of ripe, juicy berries, and the lime-trees and elder-bush at Nörre Vosborg stood before him in their luxuriance of blossom; he longed to see them again.

Toward spring began the fishery; Jörgen helped in it, he had grown during the last year, he was quick and brisk in all his movements, there was no lack of life in him. He could swim as though he were native to the element; he leapt into the water, and floated on it as if it were a soft couch. He was often warned to beware of the mackerel, who, it is said, take the best swimmer, draw him down into the water, and eat him. But such was not Jörgen's lot.

Amongst his neighbors on the sand hills was a youth named Morten. He and Jörgen were good friends, and they now hired themselves out to go together in a vessel bound for Norway. Afterward, they went to Holland together. Friends they were, these two; but when one lad is passionate by nature, and the other somewhat provoking, there will be differences now and then. And once when they had been sitting together, dining off the same clay dish, and mocking words were spoken by Morten, Jörgen seized his clasp-knife, and held it with a threatening gesture in Morten's face, his

cheeks, meanwhile, deadly pale, and his eyes fierce with anger. But Morten coolly observed, "So thou art of the sort who use the knife!" Scarcely had he spoken when Jörgen's hand was lowered, he said not a word, finished his dinner, and went off to his work. But when leisure came, he went up to Morten, and said, "Strike me in the face; I deserve it! I don't know how it is, there is something in me that is always boiling over."

"All's right!" replied Morten, and they became faster friends than ever. And when after their return home to the sand hills the story of this quarrel was told, folk said, "Jörgen might be like a pot, soon boiling over, but he was an honest pot at any rate." — "But he is no true Jutlander; nobody can call him a Jutlander," rejoined Morten.

Young and healthy were they both, well-grown, and with strong limbs. Jörgen was the slenderer and more active of the two.

Up in Norway the peasants take the cattle to the heights for pasture, and there take up their abode for a time; in like manner on the western coast of Jutland, in the early spring, the fishermen build huts among the sand hills, build them with the planks from shipwrecks, cover them over with heath and turf, and arrange couches all round the interior. Each fisherman has a girl in his service, — his Æsepige, she is called; she provides baits for the hooks, must be ready at the landing-place with warm ale to refresh him, gets his food ready when he returns faint and weary, fetches the fish from the boat, cuts it up, and in short has plenty to do.

Jörgen, his foster-father, a few other fishermen, and their girls had house-room together; Morten lodged in the next hut.

One of the girls — Elsa was her name — had known Jörgen ever since they were quite little ones; they liked each other, and were always well pleased to be together; they were very unlike, for Jörgen was brown, very brown of complexion, and she had a white skin, hair as yellow as flax, and eyes as blue as the sea on a sunny day. This girl and Jörgen were one day walking together, and Jörgen was holding her hand with a warm, fervent grasp, when all at once she said to him, "Jörgen, I have something on my mind! Let me be thine Æse-

pige, instead of Morten's. He has hired me — but thou art like a brother to me — and Morten, he is my sweetheart. But don't go and gossip about it to the rest."

Jörgen felt as if the sand hills were whirling under his feet, he spoke not a word, he only nodded his head in token of assent. But he felt that he hated Morten, that Morten had robbed him of the only creature he loved. Never before had he understood his own feelings toward Elsa, and now all hope of winning her for his was past.

When the sea is somewhat rough, and the fishermen are returning home, it is curious to see how the boats pass over the sand reefs. One of the party stands upright, and the rest give heed to him, sitting with their oars ready to use when he shall give the sign that the great wave which will lift the boat over the reef is coming on. It comes, the vessel is uplifted so that its keel can be seen from the land: another moment — the whole vanishes from sight, neither boat, nor men, nor mast, can be seen — one might fancy the sea had swallowed up all: again, another moment — and the vessel reappears, like a mighty sea-monster crawling up the wave, the moving oars like the creature's legs. The second and third reefs are passed in like manner, and then the fishermen spring out into the water and draw the boat ashore. But the slightest mistake in the order when passing these reefs — a moment's delay — and shipwreck must be the result.

"It would soon be all over with me and with Morten, too, then!" This thought came into Jörgen's head out at sea; they were approaching the outermost sand-reef; his foster-father, who was steersman, had suddenly turned sick. "Father, let me take your place," he cried, springing up. His eye glanced from Morten to the sea, from the sea to Morten, and the oars moved on with steady strokes, and the great wave rolled forward — but then his look wandered to his foster-father's pale, suffering face, and he could not obey his wicked impulse. Safely the boat passed the reefs, and safely the fishermen sprang ashore, but that evil thought still lurked in Jörgen's blood, and every little bitter memory from his childhood's times until now surged up and poisoned his life. Morten had mocked him often, now he had robbed him — he could not

help hating him. Some of the fishermen noticed the change in Jörgen, but not Morten himself; he was the same as ever, ready to help and eager to talk — a little too much of the latter.

But Jörgen's foster-father took to his bed, and died a few weeks later. Jörgen was his heir; he was now master of the cottage behind the sand hills — a poor house enough, but still it was something: Morten had not so much.

"You won't go hiring yourself out again, Jörgen; you will stay with us," said an old fisherman.

But that was by no means Jörgen's idea; on the contrary, he resolved now to see a little more of the world. The eel-spearer up at Fialtring had a cousin at Old Skagen, a fisherman too, but wealthy, and a ship-owner besides, — a kind old man, it was said, with whom it would be pleasant to take service. Old Skagen lies right at the top of Jutland, far away from Hunsby sand hills, and that was what best pleased Jörgen in the idea; he had no mind to be present at the wedding of Elsa and Morten, which was to take place in a few weeks' time.

But when the old fisherman heard his plan, he declared Jörgen was quite foolish; now that he had a house of his own, Elsa would be easily persuaded to take him instead of Morten. Jörgen's answer was very short, yet it was not easy to make out his meaning. The old man led Elsa up to him. She did not say much; this was the pith of what she said, "Thou hast a house, one must consider that."

And Jörgen did consider many things. The sea has its tides and currents, the human heart has tides and currents too; many thoughts, strong and weak, passed through Jörgen's head and heart before he asked Elsa, "Suppose Morten had as good a house as mine, which of us wouldst thou prefer?"

"But Morten has not one, and will never have one."

"We are supposing that he had one," insisted Jörgen.

"Why, of course, I should take Morten then. But one must have something to live on."

Jörgen thought over this answer the whole night long. There was something within him, he found, stronger even than his love for Elsa. After long reflection he went to Morten,

and offered to give up his house to him on the lowest possible terms, saying he would himself go out for hire — it pleased him better. And Elsa, when she heard it, kissed him and thanked him, for she really loved Morten best.

Early in the morning would Jörgen depart. It was already late in the evening when he had a fancy to go and see Morten once more. On his way among the sand hills he met the old fisherman, who greatly disapproved of his going away, and declared Morten must go about with a charm sewn up in his clothes, to make the young girls fall in love with him. Jörgen put aside this talk, said farewell, and went up to the house where Morten dwelt; he heard loud voices — evidently Morten was not alone. Jörgen stood irresolute; least of all should he like to meet Elsa there, and now he thought of it, he would rather not have Morten thanking him over again, so he turned back without going in.

Next morning, before daylight, he tied up his bundle, took his provisions for the day, and started on his way through the sand hills to the shore — it was pleasanter walking by the sea than along the heavy, sandy road, and the nearest way too, as he was bound first for Fialtring near Bovbierg, where he had promised to pay the eel-spearer a visit.

The sea was smooth and blue, shells and pebbles, his childhood's playthings, he crushed under his feet as he walked. By and by his nose began to bleed — a trivial matter enough, it seemed, but a few large blood drops fell on his sleeve; he stopped the bleeding, and walked on, feeling already lighter and gayer of mood. Some sea-kale grew among the sand, he broke off a branch and decked his hat with it, resolving he would be joyous and glad; was he not going forth into the wide world, "a little way up the river," as the young eels had craved? "But beware of wicked men, who will spear you, skin you, cut you in pieces, and lay you in dishes!" he repeated, laughingly, to himself. "Forewarned is forearmed," he thought; "I shall slip whole-skinned through the world."

The sun was already high when he approached the narrow inlet between the German Ocean and the Nissum Fiord; he looked back, and descried in the distance two men on horseback, others following them, and all riding at great speed, he wondered why.

The ferry-boat lay on the opposite side of the water. Jörgen shouted till it came for him. He sprang on board, but before he and the ferryman were half across arrived the men whom he had noticed following him on horseback; with threatening gestures they called to him to come back, in the name of the law. Jörgen could not conceive what they meant, but he thought it wisest to obey; he took the oar himself and rowed back. In a moment the men leaped into the boat and tied his hands together with a rope. It is well we have caught thee," cried they; "thy crime will cost thee thy life."

He was accused of murder, neither more nor less. Morten had been found stabbed in the neck with a knife; the old fisherman had, late on the foregoing evening, met Jörgen on his way to Morten's house, and it was remembered that once before Jörgen had threatened Morten with his knife; it was concluded that he must be the murderer. Now came the question, where should he be confined until the time of his trial? Ringkiobing was the proper place, but it was a good way off, and the wind was against them. In less than half an hour they crossed the fiord, and now they were only a quarter of a mile from Nörre Vosborg, which was still, as of old time, strong, and defended with moats and ramparts. Among the men was a brother of the bailiff of Nörre Vosborg; he thought that they might get leave to confine Jörgen, for the present, in the hole where Long Margaret, the gypsy, had been shut up until her execution.

No one listened to Jörgen's defense, and those few drops of blood on his shirt were witnesses against him. Conscious of his innocence, he quietly gave himself up to his fate.

They passed close by the old rampart, where once the castle of Sir Niels had stood — the very same spot that Jörgen's feet had trodden some years earlier, when, together with his foster-parents, he had gone to spend those four bright days on the heath. By the very same path was he now led up to Nörre Vosborg; and here, as then, stood the elder-bush in full blossom, and the tall lime-trees wafted to him their fragrance; he might have fancied it was only yesterday that he had seen them last.

In the western wing of the building, under the grand stair-

case, a passage leads into a low-roofed vaulted cellar; it was hence that Long Margaret was led to execution, the old gypsy woman who confessed to having devoured the hearts of five maidens, and believed that, could she have eaten two more, she would have flown away as a Night Raven.[1] A small, narrow air-hole in the wall was the only window; the fragrant lime-trees outside could not shed the least of their refreshing fragrance within; a straw pallet was ready to receive him; all was cold, damp, and rough, but a good conscience makes an easy pillow, and Jörgen might lie softly, in spite of all discomfort.

The thick wooden door was closed, and the iron bolts drawn; but superstition can creep through a key-hole, alike in the lordly mansion as in the fisherman's hut, and as Jörgen now sat in darkness and silence he could not but think of Long Margaret and her horrible crimes. Her last thoughts had filled that narrow space the night before her execution. Nor could he help calling to mind the sorcery that had been practiced in this house when General Swanwedel[2] dwelt there, and how the ban-dog that guarded the bridge had every morning been found hung in his chain across the railing. All these recollections thrilled through Jörgen's imagination, turning his blood cold with horror; but then he would try to banish them, and bring before his mind that sweet picture of the blossoming elder and fragrant lime-trees that flourished outside.

Nor was he left here long; he was removed to Ringkiobing, but there his confinement was none the less rigorous. For

[1] Every exorcised spirit becomes, it is believed, a Night Raven, which flies ever eastward, toward the Holy Sepulchre, for, once arrived there, it will be at rest. Long Margaret's superstition seems to have been peculiar to herself. She was taken up and tried in 1770. — *Translator.*

[2] This Major-General Swanwedel served in the war with Sweden toward the close of the seventeenth century, in the reign of Christian V. Tradition describes him as skilled in the Black Art. Once he found himself, with a very small party of followers, entirely surrounded by the Swedes. But he knew how to get out of a difficulty, for in the darkness of the night he transformed a host of bulrushes growing on the spot into soldiers, and, supported by these, he attacked and routed his foes. Next morning these soldiers were again tall bulrushes growing in the field. — *Translator.*

Jörgen's times were not as ours; things went hardly then with poor men; a nobleman's coachman or valet was often appointed village judge, with power to condemn the peasant to a severe flogging or loss of all his goods, for some trifling offense. And thus, in Jutland, far from the capital, far from the King and the wise rulers of the state, the law took its course with little consideration for justice, or mercy either.

Bitterly cold was his miserable cell; how would this wretchedness end? Guiltless had he been thrown into this dungeon: such was his lot! Plenty of leisure had he for thinking over the hard measure that had been dealt him in this world; no matter, he knew all would right itself in the life beyond the grave, the second life that assuredly awaits us. In the fisherman's lowly cottage that faith had taken firm root in his soul; the light that amid the sunshine and abundance of Spain could not pierce the darkness of his father's mind, — that light shone brightly upon him amid temporal darkness, cold, and loneliness, — that blessed light of comfort and hope, God's merciful gift, that cannot deceive or lead astray.

The spring storms drew near. The roaring of the German Ocean can be heard for miles inland, and when the tempest abates there is a sound as of hundreds of heavy wagons rolling over a hard underground road. Jörgen heard this sound in his dungeon, and it was a real delight to him; no old melody could so move his heart as the music of the rolling sea — the open sea, the sea that had borne him over the world with the speed of the winds — the sea, over which men pass, like the snail, their house ever with them, standing ever on their own native ground, although foreign air breathes around them, foreign lands encompass them. How intently he listened to that deep rolling! how his thoughts, meanwhile, surged up and rked within him! O! to be free, free! even though w soles to one's shoes, and with patched garments; a. ometimes his soul glowed with indignant rage, and he struck the wall with his clinched fist.

Weeks, months, a whole year had passed away, when the gypsy Niels Tyv — the horse-jocky, as he was also called — was taken up, and from his confession Jörgen's innocence was established.

At a little tavern to the north of Ringkiobing Fiord had Morten and Niels Tyv met each other on the evening before Jörgen's leaving home. Several glasses were emptied, and Morten's tongue was loosed; he began to boast of having now got a house and a wife, and when Niels asked, "Where is your money to buy the house?" Morten proudly clapped his hand on his pocket, "The money is here, where it ought to be," quoth he. This vaunt cost him his life, for when he rose to go Niels followed him and stabbed him in the back of his neck with a knife, — for the sake of the money that was not in his pocket after all.

There was a vast deal of talk about it, but for us it is enough to know that Jörgen was set free. But what compensation had he for the long weary days spent in prison, in cold and loneliness? Why, he was told it was a good thing for him that he was innocent — now he might go. True the mayor gave him ten marks for travelling expenses, and several citizens of Ringkiobing offered him a dinner; there are some kind hearts in the world; not all men "spear, skin, and devour" their fellows. But the kindest of all was a merchant from Skagen, named Brönne — the very same man into whose service Jörgen had intended to enter before his captivity; business had brought him to Ringkiobing just at that time; he heard the whole story, he had a heart to feel and understand what Jörgen had suffered; now he would show him some little kindness, — would prove to him that there are good men in the world.

From prison, not only to freedom, but to happiness! it was a wonderful change. But to no man's lot does it fall to drain a cup of unmixed bitterness. Such could not man endure to offer his fellow-man — how could God the All-loving?

"Let all the past be buried and forgotten," said Merchant Brönne. "We will draw a thick black stroke over the last year, and burn the almanac, and in two days hence we will be off together for Skagen — happy, peaceful Skagen! quite the farthest corner of the country, folk call it; no matter, it is a blessed corner, with windows opening on the wide world."

That journey was bliss indeed! that first breathing pure air, and passing from the cold damp prison into the warm sun-

shine. The heath was gay with thousands of blossoms, the shepherd-boy sat on a warrior's grave-mound, blowing his flute, made out of the bones of sheep; Fata Morgana displayed her hanging gardens and floating woods, and the wonderful transparent appearance called "Loki driving his flock" was seen.

Up toward the Lime Fiord, up toward Skagen, whence the men with the long beards that earned them the name of Lombards[1] had emigrated when, in the days of the famine, under King Snio, it was determined that all the children and old people should be put to death; and slain they would have been most assuredly, had not Gambaruk, the noble woman of great wealth, proposed instead that the young and strong should leave the country. Jörgen knew all this, and though he had not beheld the Lombards' land beyond the Alps, he could easily picture it to himself, for had he not in his boyhood seen the south, seen Spain? He remembered well the piled heaps of fruit, the red pomegranate-blossoms, the hum, and buzz, and ringing of bells in that southern city. But he felt he loved the land of his home the best, and Jörgen's home was Denmark.

At last they reached "Vendilskaga," as Skagen is called in the old Norse and Icelandic writings. Houses and towns lay scattered for miles amid the shifting sand hills — a wild land, where the wind is ever at play in the loose soil, and where sea-gulls and wild swans are heard screaming with all their might. A league southwest of Grenen lies High or Old Skagen; here dwelt Merchant Brönne, and here must Jörgen now dwell. The house was thatched, the little out-houses had each an inverted boat for a roof, and fragments from wrecks joined together made a pig-sty. Inclosure there was none, seeing there was nothing to inclose; but on ropes, in long rows one above another, hung a multitude of fishes drying in the wind. The whole shore was strewn with dead herrings; they so abounded in these parts that they were driven to land in shoals, were often thrown back into the sea, or left to rot on the coast.

[1] With greater probability Lombard has been derived from *Long spear*, or *lance*, as hellebarde, a halberd. Long beards were too commonly worn in those days to be a characteristic of any particular race. — *Translator.*

The merchant's wife and daughter, nay, his servants too, came out in delight to meet the head of the household ; there were such happy, joyous greetings, and the daughter had such a sweet face, such bright eyes!

The house was large and very comfortable ; dishes of fish were set on the table, plaice fit for a king, and wine from Skagen's vineyard — the great sea — whence came the grapes ready pressed, both in barrels and bottles.

When mother and daughter had heard who Jörgen was, and how hardly he, an innocent man, had been treated, they both looked on him with kindness, and the beautiful Clara's bright eyes beamed more sweetly than ever. A blessed home had Jörgen in Old Skagen ; it did him good, and Jörgen's heart had endured so much. Even the waters of love had become bitterness for him. But Jörgen was still young, and his heart still soft ; perhaps it was well that in three weeks' time Clara was to sail to Christiansand, in Norway, to spend the winter with an aunt.

The Sunday preceding her journey all were to go up together to the Lord's table. It was a large and stately church, built by the Scotch and Dutch many centuries ago, some distance from the town, as it stands now. The church was somewhat ruinous, and the road through the deep sand disagreeable enough, but that mattered little. The sand lay heaped up outside the wall inclosing the cemetery, but the graves had as yet been kept free from it.

It was the largest church north of the Lime Fiord. The Virgin Mary, with a gold crown on her head, and the Infant Saviour in her arms, stood pictured in bright colors above the altar ; the holy Apostles were ranged round the choir, and high on the wall hung portraits of Skagen's old burgomasters and councilmen. The pulpit was handsomely carved. The sun shone gloriously into the church, lighting up the bright crown and the little vessel that hung down from the roof.

Jörgen was overpowered by the same pure, child-like feeling of devotion that had thrilled through him when, a little ship-boy, he stood in the rich Spanish cathedral. But it was better for him to be here, for here he felt he was one of the congregation.

After the sermon followed the Lord's Supper, and Jörgen knelt with the rest to receive the consecrated bread and wine, and it so happened that he knelt next to Clara. But his thoughts were in such wise raised to his Saviour and to the holy ordinance, that not till they ; both rose up did he know that she had been his neighbor. He saw the salt tears rolling down her cheeks.

Two days later she sailed for Norway, and Jörgen went out to help in the fishery ; there was more fish to be caught then than now. The shoals of mackerel glittered brightly amid the darkness of the night, thus betraying themselves and the course they were taking: the crabs uttered a plaintive cry when caught — fishes are not so dumb as folk say. Jörgen was more discreet than they ; he kept his secret — and yet burst forth it would some day.

Every Sunday when he sat in church, and his eyes rested on the picture of the Virgin Mother, they also rested awhile on the spot where Clara had knelt by his side, and he thought of her and of her kindness to him.

Autumn came with its rains and mists ; the water washed over the soil of the town, the sand could not suck it all in, and folk had to wade through it, or sometimes even sailed through the streets in a boat. Snow-storms and sand-storms followed ; ships were wrecked on those fatal reefs ; the sand whirled about and around the houses till the inhabitants had to creep out through the chimneys. But this was a mere matter of course in Skagen : comfort and warmth reigned in-doors ; the fires were fed with turf, or with crackling wood from the wrecks, and Merchant Brönne read old chronicles aloud of an evening. He read about Prince Hamlet of Denmark, how he landed from England and fought a battle near Bovbierg ; his grave was at Ramme, only a few miles from the eel-spearer's home ; there the heath was as it were an immense cemetery, studded with hundreds of grave-mounds. Merchant Brönne had himself visited Hamlet's grave. More talk of old times, and of their Scottish and English neighbors, followed, and then Jörgen sang the old ballad about "The King of England's Son," about the stately ship, fitted out, —

"With splendid panels bright with gold,
Where stood our Lord's sweet words of old;
Whilst on the prow, in colors rare,
The King's son clasped his maiden fair."

This verse especially Jörgen sang with passion, while his lustrous black eyes, black and lustrous from his birth, sparkled with more fire than ever. And thus the evenings passed pleasantly, what with song and what with reading; all were made happy in this house, down to the very animals; the tin shelves shone with clean plates, hams and sausages hung under the ceiling, and their winter stores were inexhaustible. Many such farm-houses are there yet to be found in West Jutland, — abundant, like this one, in comfort, good cheer, good sense, and good humor; and as for hospitality, they are like the Arab's tent.

Jörgen had never before spent so merry a time, — never at least since the four days at the funeral party, when he was a child. And yet Clara, his master's beloved and loving daughter, was absent. But she was never absent from their thoughts, and in April he knew a vessel was to be sent out to Norway, and would fetch her home, and Jörgen was to go with it. "He had grown so bright, so joyous and hearty," declared Mistress Brönne, "it was quite a pleasure to look at him."

"And so it is to look at thee," rejoined the old merchant. "Jörgen has put new life into our winter evenings and into old mother too! Thou hast grown young again! Thou wert once the prettiest girl in Viborg, and that is saying something, — for I have always considered the girls of Viborg the most charming in the world." Jörgen made no answer to this, but he could not help thinking of one Skagen girl, — the same whom he was to bring home.

One morning Merchant Brönne went out from Old Skagen to the light-house at Grenen. The signal-lights were extinguished, for the sun was already high when he mounted the tower. Four miles from the land's extreme point, under the water, stretch the sand-reefs; beyond them he descried several ships, and among these, by the aid of his telescope, he believed he could distinguish the *Karen Brönne* his own vessel, that must have Clara, and Jörgen on board. He was right.

To Clara, as she sat by the gunwale, Skagen's light-house and church-towers appeared like sea-birds on the clear blue water. Presently she discerned the sand hills; if the wind did not change, they might reach home in an hour. So near were they to a haven of joy, so near to death and its terrors.

Suddenly a plank sprang out of the ship, and the water rushed in; they stopped up the aperture, the pumps were worked, all the sails unfurled, the flag of distress hoisted. They were still a whole league out at sea; the fishing-boats could be seen, but they were too far off: the wind blew them landward, the current too was in their favor, but it was not strong enough. The ship began to sink, Jörgen threw his right arm around Clara.

What a look was that she gave him when, invoking our Lord's holy name, he dashed with her into the sea! she shrieked, but she felt certain he would not let go his hold.

"The King's son clasped his maiden fair:"

Jörgen acted out the old words in this hour of terror and peril; a matchless swimmer, he worked his way with his feet and his one free hand, the other still clasped tightly round the young girl; now he floated, now he trod the water with his feet, using all the movements he knew, husbanding his strength, that it might last till he reached the land. He heard her sigh, he felt a convulsive thrill pass through her, and pressed her only the closer; now a wave rolled over them, but the current still lifted them on; the water was so deep, so clear, that for a moment he fancied he saw the flashing mackerel beneath, — or was it Leviathan, ready to devour them? The clouds cast shadows over the water, then again came dazzling sunbeams; screaming birds flew overhead in flocks, and wild ducks, heavily and sleepily drifting over the surface of the water, flew up, dismayed at the bold swimmer. He felt his strength was ebbing fast — nay, help was coming — a boat draws near. Behold! yonder white form under the water, what is it? A wave lifted him up — the shape was nearer — he felt a shock — and all was darkness.

There, on the sand-reef, lay the wrecked ship, the sea partly covering it; the white figure at the beak-head leant against an

anchor, the sharp iron alone projecting above the water. The current driving him on with fatal force, Jörgen had struck against this figure ; in a swoon he fell with his burden, but the next wave again lifted him and the young girl.

The fishermen got them both into the boat ; the blood was streaming over Jörgen's face, and he was as one dead, but the girl he still clasped so tightly that they had to tear her out of his encircling arm. Pale and lifeless, she lay outstretched in the boat ; all measures for restoring her were tried, but in vain — she was dead. For several minutes Jörgen must have swum clasping only a corpse, laboring and wrestling for the life of one whose soul had already fled.

But Jörgen himself still breathed ; they bore him to the nearest cottage among the sand hills ; a man of many talents, smith, small trader, and surgeon in one, who happened to be on the spot, bound up his wound : the next day a physician was sent for from Hjörring.

His brain was affected, he lay raving and uttering wild cries till the third day, when he sank into a sort of trance ; his life, it seemed, hung by a thread, and that this thread should give way, the doctor declared, was the best wish that could be breathed for Jörgen. "Let us pray our Lord to take him ; he will never be a man again."

But our Lord took him not, the thread would not break, albeit memory and all the faculties of the mind were injured. It was terrible! a living body was left, a body soon regaining health and strength.

"He became an idiot in the effort to save our child," said Merchant Brönne ; "he is now our son." And thus Jörgen remained in the merchant's house.

"An idiot:" that was what Jörgen was called now, but it was hardly the right expression ; he was like a musical instrument, the strings whereof are loosened and have lost the power of sound. For a few moments, sometimes, the lost power returned ; then they gave out old melodies or isolated chords. Sometimes pictures seemed to rise before his mind once more ; they faded away into mist, and again he sat, his face blank, motionless, idealess. We may hope he did not suffer at such times ; the light died out of his dark eyes, and they looked like black, opaque glass.

"Poor idiot Jörgen!" folk called him. And this was he whom his mother carried, yearning, under her heart; he whom his father destined to an earthly lot so rich and blissful that it would be overweening pride, terrible vanity to wish, far less expect, a life after this. All the great qualities of his soul thus flung away in waste! Hard days, anguish, and deluded hopes, — such had been his portion; he was like the precious flower-root, torn from its native soil and flung down to rot in the sand of a northern clime! Could this really be the end of the soul created in the image of God? a mere shuttle-cock, tossed to and fro by the chances of this world? No! The God of Love will give him compensation in another life for all that he lost and suffered in this. "The Lord is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works." Often did pious old Mistress Brönne repeat David's words of faith and comfort, and her heart's prayer arose that our Lord would soon end Jörgen's life of sorrow, and take him hence to enjoy "His unspeakable gift," the Life Everlasting.

In the church-yard where the sand whirled over the walls was Clara buried; Jörgen took no notice of her funeral; it did not enter into his narrow world of thought, which consisted only in fragments from the past. Every Sunday he followed the family to church, and sat there quietly with his blank face. One day, during the psalm-singing, he heaved a sigh, his eyes sparkled; he was gazing on the altar, on the spot where, more than a twelvemonth ago, he had knelt by the side of the gentle Clara; his face grew white, his lips murmured her name, and tears rolled down his cheeks.

He was led out of church, and questioned kindly, but he replied that he was well, and it did not seem that he had realized his loss. Poor soul! tried indeed, but not rejected by the Lord. For God, our Creator, is wise and all-loving — who dares doubt it? Our heart and our understanding acknowledge this truth, the Bible confirms it: "His mercy is over all his works."

In Spain, where amid laurels and orange-trees the gilded Moorish cupolas are fanned by warm breezes, and song and castanets are heard, sat in his stately palace the rich old merchant, Jörgen's grandfather. Himself a childless old man, he

sat and watched a procession of pretty children with torches and waving banners passing through the street. How much of his riches would he not give to possess such children himself! He sighed as he thought of his daughter and her child, who, he believed, had never seen the light of this world — how then should it attain to the glory of Paradise? "Poor child!"

"Poor child!" indeed! a child still, though now upward of thirty years of age; for Jörgen lived thus for many years in Old Skagen.

The flying sand had strewed itself over the graves of the church-yard, up to the very walls of the church; but here among those gone before them, among those near and dear to them, still must the dead be buried. Merchant Brönne and his wife now rested here, under the white sand, among their children.

It was early in the year, it was the time of storms: the sand rose up like smoke from the sand hills; the sea tossed huge waves on the shore; large flocks of birds, dark like tempest-clouds, flew screaming overhead, and ship after ship was wrecked on those fatal reefs stretching along the coast from the light-house near Skagen to Hunsby sand hills. It was in the afternoon, Jörgen sat alone in his room; a sudden light dawned on his mind, a feeling somehow akin to the restlessness that had often, in his younger years, driven him forth over the sand hills or the heath.

"Home! home!" he cried. No one heard him; he left the house, sand and pebbles tossing into his face and whirling around him. Toward the church he went; the sand lay heaped up against the wall and half covered the windows; the church-door was not locked; Jörgen opened it without difficulty and went in.

The wind swept howling over the town of Skagen; it was a hurricane, such as had not been known within the memory of man. An awful tempest arose! But Jörgen was sheltered within God's house, and whilst black night reigned outside, within him it grew brighter, — bright with the unquenchable light of the soul. The heavy stone in his head, he felt, burst with a clang. He fancied that the organ was playing, but it was the storm and the roaring sea that he heard; he seated

himself; the lamps, he thought, were kindled one by one till there was a blaze of light he had never seen but once, in the Spaniards' land. And all the portraits of the old councilmen and burgomasters became animated; they stepped forth from the walls where they had hung so many years, and seated themselves in the choir. And the gates and doors of the church all opened, and now entered the dead, clad in festive garb, such as was the wont in olden time, and sweet music was played while they entered and took their places. Like rolling billows streamed forth the psalm-singing, and Jörgen's old foster-parents from Hunsby sand hills were there, and the good Merchant Brönne and his wife, and beside them, next to Jörgen, sat their gentle, loving daughter. And she held out her hand to Jörgen, and they went together up to the very altar where, once before, they had knelt, and the priest joined their hands, consecrating them to a life of love. Then burst forth the sound of the trumpet, wonderfully like a childish voice, full of love and longing, and it swelled into a fullness of rich and glorious tones, blessed to hear, and yet mighty to burst the grave-stones asunder. And the ship that hung in the choir sank downward, and grew so vast, so splendid! with silken sails and gilded masts, anchors of red gold and ropes of silken twine, like the ship in the old song. And the newly-wedded pair stepped on board, and all the congregation followed, and there was room for all. And the arches and walls of the church blossomed like the elder and the fragrant lime-trees; joyously they waved their green leaves, they bowed, they parted asunder, and the ship was lifted up and sailed with them through the air, through the sea. And every lamp and candle in the church had become a tiny star, and all sang a hymn, the winds singing with them: —

"O brother, from thine earthly love
Called to a higher bliss above,
Deem not in vain these years of strife,
For thou art heir to endless life!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

Jörgen sang "Hallelujah!" too; and this word was his last in this world; the bond that held the immortal spirit

snapped asunder. Only a lifeless corpse lay in that dark church, while the storm, wailing in wild, high notes, whirled above and around it a cloud of flying sand.

. . . . . .

The next morning was Sunday; the pastor and the congregation set out on their way to church. The road was almost impassable for the sand, and on their arrival they found the church-door completely buried. And the pastor read a brief prayer, and said that God had now closed the door to this his house, and that they must go hence and raise Him up a new one elsewhere. So they sang a psalm and returned homeward.

Jörgen was sought in vain throughout the town of Skagen and among the sand hills; it was supposed that the rolling waves of sand had buried him beneath them.

Nor was this altogether an error. But they could not guess that his body lay entombed in a vast sarcophagus, even the church itself. The Almighty's own hand had flung earth over his coffin; the heavy sand heaps lay above and around it; they cover it to this day. The flying sand lies heaped above those mighty arches; thorns and wild roses now twine over the church, and the tower, still projecting above the sand, is pointed out to every stranger who visits those parts. So his grave-stone can be seen for miles around; no king had ever a more splendid mausoleum. And no one can ever disturb the repose of the dead, no one has ever known his resting-place until now. For this history of Jörgen's life and death the storm sang to me, — I alone heard it, — alone among the sand hills.

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

IT was terribly cold; it snowed and was already almost dark, and evening came on, the last evening of the year. In the cold and gloom a poor little girl, bare-headed and barefoot, was walking through the streets. When she left her own house she certainly had had slippers on; but of what use were they? They were very big slippers, and her mother had used them till then, so big were they. The little maid lost them as she slipped across the road, where two carriages were rattling by terribly fast. One slipper was not to be found again, and a boy had seized the other, and run away with it. He thought he could use it very well as a cradle, some day when he had children of his own. So now the little girl went with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, and a bundle of them in her hand. No one had bought anything of her all day, and no one had given her a farthing.

Shivering with cold and hunger she crept along, a picture of misery, poor little girl! The snow-flakes covered her long fair hair, which fell in pretty curls over her neck; but she did did not think of that now. In all the windows lights were shining, and there was a glorious smell of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve. Yes, she thought of that!

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat down, cowering. She had drawn up her little feet, but she was still colder, and she did not dare to go home, for she had sold no matches, and did not bring a farthing of money. From her father she would certainly receive a beating, and besides, it was cold at home, for they had nothing over them but a roof through which the wind whistled, though the largest rents had been stopped with straw and rags.

Her little hands were almost benumbed with the cold. Ah! a match might do her good, if she could only draw one from

the bundle, and rub it against the wall, and warm her hands at it. She drew one out. R-r-atch! how it sputtered and burned! It was a warm bright flame, like a little candle, when she held her hands over it; it was a wonderful little light! It really seemed to the little girl as if she sat before a great polished stove, with bright brass feet and a brass cover. How the fire burned! how comfortable it was! but the little flame went out, the stove vanished, and she had only the remains of the burned match in her hand.

A second was rubbed against the wall. It burned up, and when the light fell upon the wall it became transparent like a thin veil, and she could see through it into the room. On the table a snow-white cloth was spread; upon it stood a shining dinner service; the roast goose smoked gloriously, stuffed with apples and dried plums. And what was still more splendid to behold, the goose hopped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor, with a knife and fork in its breast, to the little girl. Then the match went out, and only the thick, damp, cold wall was before her. She lighted another match. Then she was sitting under a beautiful Christmas tree; it was greater and more ornamented than the one she had seen through the glass door at the rich merchant's. Thousands of candles burned upon the green branches, and colored pictures like those in the print shops looked down upon them. The little girl stretched forth her hand toward them; then the match went out. The Christmas lights mounted higher. She saw them now as stars in the sky: one of them fell down, forming a long line of fire.

"Now some one is dying," thought the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only person who had loved her, and who was now dead, had told her that when a star fell down a soul mounted up to God.

She rubbed another match against the wall; it became bright again, and in the brightness the old grandmother stood clear and shining, mild and lovely.

"Grandmother!" cried the child, "O! take me with you! I know you will go when the match is burned out. You will vanish like the warm fire, the warm food, and the great, glorious Christmas tree!"

And she hastily rubbed the whole bundle of matches, for she wished to hold her grandmother fast. And the matches burned with such a glow that it became brighter than in the middle of the day ; grandmother had never been so large or so beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and both flew in brightness and joy above the earth, very, very high, and up there was neither cold, nor hunger, nor care — they were with God.

But in the corner, leaning against the wall, sat the poor girl with red cheeks and smiling mouth, frozen to death on the last evening of the Old Year. The New Year's sun rose upon a little corpse ! The child sat there, stiff and cold, with the matches, of which one bundle was burned. " She wanted to warm herself," the people said. No one imagined what a beautiful thing she had seen, and in what glory she had gone in with her grandmother to the New Year's Day.

FLITTING DAY.

PERHAPS you remember Ole, the watchman on the tower. I have told of two visits to him; now I will tell you of a third, though not the last one.

It has generally been at New Year's time that I have gone up to him; but this time it was Flitting Day, when the lower town is unpleasant; the streets are so littered with heaps of rubbish, broken chairs, and crockery — not to speak of fusty old bed-straw which one has to go trampling under foot. Well, there I came; and, in the middle of these outpourings of the lumber-room and dustbin, I saw two children at play: they were playing at going to bed; it looked so inviting here for that game, they thought. Yes, they snuggled down in the live straw, and drew some tattered old scrap of hanging over them for a counterpane. "That was beautiful," they said. It was too beautiful for me; so I hurried off, and went up to Ole.

"It is Flitting Day," said he. "Streets and alleys serve as dustbins, — dustbins on a grand style; but a single cart-load is enough for me. I can always pick something out of it; and so I did, soon after Christmas. I was plodding down a street, all was damp and raw and puddly — just the place and weather to catch cold in. The dustman had drawn up his cart there, brimful; it was a kind of pattern-book of Copenhagen streets on Flitting Day. At the back of the cart stood a pine-tree, still quite green and hung with tinsel. It had been the centre-piece of a Christmas show: now it was turned out into the streets, and the dustman had stuck it up behind on his dust-heap; a sight to laugh at or to weep over — yes, one might go so far as that — it all depends upon the turn of one's thoughts. Now *I* fell a-thinking, and so did some of the odds and ends that lay in the cart; or at least they may have fallen a-thinking, which is nearly the same

thing. Here lay a torn lady's glove: what was this thinking of? Shall I tell you? It lay pointing its little finger straight at the pine-tree. 'That pine-tree moves me,' it thought. '*I* too have been to the feast, among the lighted lustres. I live out my life one ball-night. A squeeze of the hand, and I burst. I have nothing more to live for.' Thus thought the glove, or thus it may have thought. 'O, the poor, flat taste of that pine-tree!' said the potsherds. Broken crockery, we know, finds everything flat. 'When one has come to the dustcart,' said they, 'it is time to give up one's fine airs and tinsels. As for ourselves, we have done some service in the world — more service than a stick of greenery like that!' See, now, that was taking another view on the subject, and many people take it; yet still the pine-tree looked well, and it was a bit of poetry on the dust-heap: there are many such to be found in the streets on Flitting Day. But the roads down there were heavy and wearisome, and I longed to get away, back to my tower, and to remain up there; for here I sit, and look down from above and indulge my humor."

Down below there the good folks are playing at *Change Houses*.[1] They work hard to pack up and pack off with their movables: and the house-goblin sits on the cart-tail and moves along with them. Household squabbles, family broils, sorrows, and cares move away from the old threshold to the new: and where is the gain, or how much can we keep of it? Truly, that has been told us long ago, in the good old verse in the advertising columns, —

"Remember Death's great Flitting Day!"

It is an awful thought, but one finds a certain strange pleasure in dwelling on it. Death ever has been, and ever will be, the trustiest of all officials, in spite of his many petty offices. Many they are indeed: have you ever thought them over?

Death is an omnibus conductor; he is a passport writer; he sets his name to our testimonials; and he is the director of life's great savings-bank. Can you understand this? All our earthly doings, great and small, are deposited in that

[1] A childish game, in which all change places, something like *Puss in the Corner*.

savings-bank. Then, when Death comes up with his Flitting Day omnibus, and we must needs get in, and be driven to Eternity-land, he gives us our testimonials on the frontier as a passport. For our diet-money on the journey, he draws out of the savings-bank one or other of our doings — whichever of them most distinctly marks our conduct: this *may* look delightful to us, but it *may* look horrible.

Nobody has yet escaped that omnibus. Tales are told, indeed, of one who was not allowed to get in, — *Jerusalem's shoemaker;*[1] he has still to run behind it: if he had managed to get in, he would have escaped the treatment given him by the poets.

Take an imaginary peep into the great Flitting Day omnibus. What a motley fellowship! There sit, side by side, kings and beggars, the genius and the idiot. Away they must go, without goods or gold; with nothing but their testimonials and their diet-money, out of life's savings-bank. But of each man's doings, which one has been drawn out and given him? Perchance a very small one, no bigger than a pea: yet a branching vine may shoot out of it.

The poor outcast, who was set on a low stool in the corner, and got thumps and hard words, is given perhaps the battered stool to take, as a token and a pledge; the stool will become a car to bear him to the land of eternity; and there spread into a throne, glittering like gold and blooming like a bower.

He who has always been tippling from the spicy cup of pleasure, and thus forgetting his other faults and follies, now receives a wooden keg as his portion; he is forced to drink out of it on his journey, and the draughts are pure and cleansing, so that his thoughts are cleared, his better and nobler sentiments are awakened, and he sees and feels what hitherto he could not or would not see; and thus he bears within himself his own punishment, *the gnawing worm that never dies.* If the motto of his wine-cup was *Forgetfulness*, the motto of his keg is *Remembrance.*

Whenever I read a good book, an historical work, I cannot help picturing to myself the person of whom I am reading, at the last stage of all, when he begins to get into Death's omni-

[1] The Wandering Jew.

bus. I cannot help thinking which of his doings Death has given him out of the savings-bank, and what sort of diet-money he has received on his way to Eternity-land. Once on a time there was a French king — I forget his name ; the good man's name is sometimes forgotten by you and me, but will surely come to light again : it was a king who, in time of famine, became the benefactor of his people ; and the people raised him a monument of snow, with the inscription, "Quicker than this melts, thou didst help!" I think Death must have given him, with reference to the monument, one single snow-flake, that would never melt ; and it flew like a white butterfly above his kingly head, onward into the deathless land. Again, there was Louis the Eleventh,— his name now I *do* remember ; one always remembers what is bad, — a sample of his doings often comes into my mind ; I only wish one could say the story was a lie.

He had his constable beheaded ; that he might do, justly or unjustly ; but the constable's innocent children, the one eight, the other seven years old, he posted on the same scaffold, and had them spattered with their father's warm blood ; and then they were led to the Bastile and set in an iron cage, without so much as a blanket to cover them. And every eighth day, King Louis sent them the headsman to pull a tooth out of each of them, for fear they should get used to their misery. And the elder one said, "My mother would die of sorrow if she knew my little brother suffered so much ; pray pull out two teeth of mine, and let him go free." And the headsman had tears in his eyes at hearing this ; but the king's will was stronger than the tears ; and every eighth day a silver dish was brought to the king, with two children's teeth on it : and as he had demanded them, so he had them. Two teeth, I think, were what Death drew out of life's savings-bank for King Louis the Eleventh, that he should take them with him on his journey to the deathless land. They flew like two fire-flies before him ; they glowed, they burned, they stung him, those innocent children's teeth.

Yes, an awful drive it is, that omnibus drive on the great Flitting Day! And tell me, when is our turn coming?

That is what makes it so very awful; that every day, every hour, every minute we may expect the omnibus. Which of our doings will it be, that Death will draw out of the savings-bank and give us for our journey? Aye, let us think it over! That Flitting Day is not to be found in the almanac.

THE RAGS.

AT the door of a paper-mill stood heaps of dust and rubbish, piled up into stacks; they had been gathered far and wide, and every rag in them had a tale to tell, and told it too; but we cannot listen to them all. Some of the rags were home-born, others came from foreign lands. Here now was a Danish rag, lying close to a rag from Norway; rank Danish was the one, and rank Norse the other; and there was likely to be some fun between the two, as any experienced Dane or Norseman could tell you.

They understood each other well enough, though the two languages were as different — so the Norwegian said — as French and Hebrew. "We go to the hill-side for ours, and get it fresh from the fountain-head, while the Dane cooks up a mawkish, wishy-washy sort of a lingo."

The rags talked, and rags are rags all the world over; they are thought nothing of except in the dust-heap.

"I am Norse," said the Norwegian; "and when I have said I am Norse, I guess I have said enough. I am firm of fibre, like the granite rocks of old Norway. The land there has a constitution, just like free America. It sets my fibres tickling to think of what I am, and to ring out my thoughts in words of the real old the grit."

"But we have a complete literature," said the Danish rag; "do you understand what that is?"

"Understand!" repeated the Norwegian: "O this flat-land creature! shall I give him a hoist up-hill, and a Northern Light or two, clout as he is? When the Norway sun has thawed the ice, then come lubberly Danish hulks, bringing us butter and cheese, a right noble cargo; and they bring, too, by way of ballast, the Danish literature. We don't want it. One can do without stale beer in a land of sparkling springs, and up yonder is a natural well that was never bored; no, nor

yet puffed into European notice by newsmongers, confederate jobbers, and book-making tourists in foreign parts. I speak free from the bottom of my lungs, and the Dane must get used to free sound ; and so he will some day, in his Scandinavian clamber up our proud mountain land — that primary knob of the universe!"

"A Danish rag could never talk like that ; no!" said the Dane. "It is not our nature: I know myself: and all our rags are like me. We are so good-natured, so unassuming. We only think too little of ourselves. Not that we gain much by our modesty: but I do like it ; I consider it quite charming. Still I am perfectly aware of my own good qualities, I assure you, but I don't talk about them: nobody shall ever bring such a charge against me. I am gentle and complaisant ; bear everything patiently, spite nobody, and speak good of all men — though there is not much good to be said of other people ; but that is their business. I can afford to smile at it, I feel myself so much superior."

"Have done with this flat-land drivel ; it turns me sick," said the Norwegian, caught a puff of wind, and fluttered away from his own heap on to another.

Paper they both became, and, as chance would have it, the Norwegian rag became a sheet on which a Norseman wrote a true-love letter to a Danish girl ; and the Danish rag became the manuscript for a Danish ode in honor of Norway's strength and beauty.

Something good there may come even of rags, when they are once out of the dust-heap, and the change has been made in favor of truth and beauty ; they keep up a good understanding between us, and in that there is a blessing.

The story is done. It is rather pretty, and offensive to nobody except to Rags.

WHAT THE WHOLE FAMILY SAID.

WHAT did the whole family say? Well, listen now first to what the little Marie said.

It was the little Marie's birthday, — the most beautiful of all days, she thought. All her small girl-friends and boy-friends came to play with her, and she wore her finest frock: this had been given to her by Grandmother, who was now with the good God; but Grandmother had cut it, and made it herself before she went up into the bright beautiful heavens. The table in Marie's room was shining with presents: there was the prettiest little kitchen, with all the belongings of a kitchen; and a doll that could twist its eyes, and cry "Ugh!" when you pinched its stomach; ah! and there was a picture-book too, full of the prettiest stories, to be read when somebody could read. But it was more beautiful than all the stories in the world to live to see many birthdays.

"O it *is* so beautiful to live!" said the little Marie. "Godfather said that was the most beautiful fairy tale."

In the room next her were both her brothers; they were big boys, one of them nine years old, and the other eleven. They thought it beautiful to live too, to live in their way; not to be babies like Marie, but thorough-going school-boys; to get their high mark in class, to fight their school-fellows, and like them all the better for it; to skate in the winter, and ride velocipedes in summer; to read of baronial castles, with draw-bridges and dungeons, and to read of discoveries in Central Africa. On this subject, though, one of the boys had a misgiving — that all might be discovered before he was grown a man: then *he* was to go out on adventures. Life is the most beautiful fairy tale, said Godfather, and one takes a part in it one's self.

It was on the parlor-floor these children played and lived; on the flat above them dwelt another branch of the family.

And here too were children, but they had slipped their leading strings, they were so big: one son was seventeen, and another twenty; but one of them was very old indeed, said little Marie: he was twenty-five, and engaged to be married. All of them were well off; had good parents, good clothes, good attainments; and they knew their own minds.

"Clear the way! down with the old hoardings!" said they: "a free look-out into the wide world: that is the finest thing we know of! Godfather is right; life is the most beautiful fairy tale of all!"

Father and mother, both elderly people (older than the children, naturally) said with smiles on their lips, in their eyes, and in their hearts, "How young they are, the young folk! things won't go on in the world just as they fancy; still, they will go on! Life is a wonderful, beautiful fairy tale!"

Higher up — a little nearer the sky, as we say when people occupy the attics — lived Godfather. Old was he, and yet so young in mind; always in good spirits. Many a long story could he tell. Far and wide had he been in the world, and from all the lands of the world were pretty tokens standing in his room. There were pictures from floor to ceiling, and some of the window-panes were of red or yellow glass; if one looked through them, the whole world lay in sunshine, however gray it might be outside. There were green plants growing in a great glass case, and in a globe attached to it there were gold-fish swimming — they looked at one as if they knew many things they would not talk about. There was a sweet smell of flowers here always, even in the winter; and in winter-time a great fire blazed on the hearth; it was so amusing to sit looking into it, and to hear how it cracked and crackled.

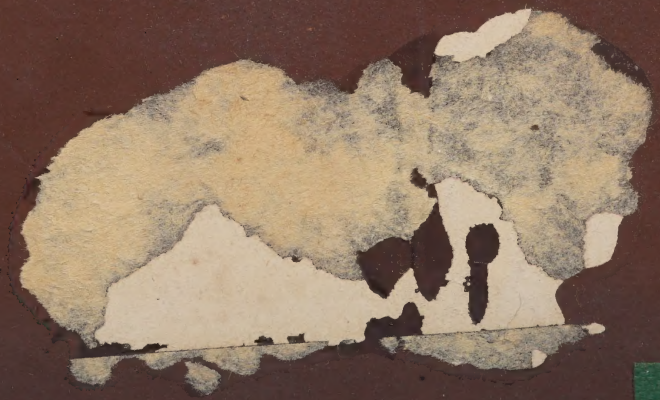
"It reads old memories out loud to me," said Godfather: and it seemed to little Marie moreover as if many pictures showed themselves in the fire. But in the large carved book-case close by stood the real books: and the one which Godfather read oftenest he called the Book of books; it was the Bible. There was pictured the history of the world, and all mankind; of the Creation, the Flood, the Kings, and the King of kings.

"All that has happened, and all that will happen, is written

in this book!" said Godfather. "So infinitely much in one single book! Aye, and all that man has to pray for, is entered there, in the prayer, 'Our Father.'"

"It is the drop of mercy!" said Godfather; "it is the pearl of comfort from God. It is laid as a gift on the child's cradle, — is laid on the child's heart. Little child, keep it carefully! never lose it, however big thou mayest grow; and thou wilt not be forsaken on life's changeful way — it will beam bright within thee — and thou wilt never be lost."

Godfather's eyes were brightened by it, till they shone with joy; once in his years of youth they had wept, and "this, too, was good," he said. "That was the time of trial: then all looked dark: now I have sunshine within and around me. The older one grows the clearer one sees, in adversity and prosperity, that our Lord is in it all, that life is the most beautiful fairy tale: that this only He can give us, and that this goes on into eternity!"

"It is beautiful to live!" said the little Marie; so, too, said the small and big boys; father and mother, the whole family, and, chief of all, Godfather: and he had experience; he was the oldest of them all; knew all stories: and he said, "Life is the most beautiful fairy tale."

THE END.